Niles' Olsen named HP Senior Male Athlete of the Year

Page B1

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Brandywine names finalist for superintendent position

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

EDIT: This story has been updated to reflect new information regarding Waggoner's withdrawal from consideration.

NILES CHARTER TOWNSHIP — After two full evenings of interviews, Brandywine Community Schools narrowed its superintendent search to one candidate.

Following interviews Monday and Tuesday, the board of education selected Amanda Lezotte, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction and Programs at Brandywine, to move forward to a second round of interviews.

The Board of Education initially selected both Lezotte and Brandon Waggoner, Director of Curriculum and Special Projects at Watervliet Public Schools, to advance to the next round before Waggoner withdrew his name from consideration Wednesday morning.

The board extended invitations to six candidates to interview for the position, which is available due to the resignation of Superintendent Travis

See **BRANDYWINE**, page A3

Maxwell Harden / Leader Publications

Amanda Lezotte was selected to move forward to a second round of interviews for the role of Brandywine Community Schools superintendent.

The original Eddies

Descendant of Edwardsburg founders visits village

By BARBARA DEMPSEY
For Leader Publications

EDWARDSBURG — Cody Edwards had been compiling his family's genealogy for 20 years. And he had read long ago that the Village of Edwardsburg was named for his ancestor, Abraham Edwards.

"It had been on my bucket list for years to come and visit because I had known of that correlation," he said recently from his home near Corvallis, Montana.

"I didn't want to just show up though, see the town, and then leave. I wanted to talk to someone and let them know that an ancestor of Abraham (Edwards) was coming to visit. That's when I reached out to Sally (Dalrymple, museum board chair), to let her know I was coming."

His recent visit to the Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum was the highlight of his eight-day trek through Michigan and Wisconsin. He not only received a hardback, autographed copy of Tom Haikin's book, "The Edwards Family of Edwardsburg: The Missing Namesakes," but Haikin was there to relate enticing little-known facts about the lives of the Edwards' family through Michigan's Territorial wilderness in the early 1800s.

Edwards had no idea that Haikin's book existed.

"I was grateful that I got a copy. It is amazing," he remarked.

Edwards shared the charts of seven generations of family history. But because of Haikin's work, he was able to discover the little gems of which stories are made. Details about Abraham Edwards – who was his great-great-great-great grandfather – and Abraham's sons, Thomas and Alexander who actually resided in the early settlement. Haikin's work with reference librarians from several notable institutions such as the University of Michigan, the Bureau of Land Management, the United States Military Academy, the USS Constitution Museum, the Library of Congress and many others, attests to the strength of his research.

Abraham Edwards was an Army officer, a garrison surgeon at both Fort Wayne and Detroit, and an aide-de-camp and close friend of Lewis Cass, Michigan's first territorial governor. Appointed the Register of the United States Land Office by President Andrew Jackson, he traveled west from Detroit in 1828 for 21 days with his wife and 10 of his children, including Thomas and Alexander, to find a suitable land office location.

The family ventured west of White Pigeon and spent the night in a cabin owned by Ezra Beardsley on the west bank of Pleasant Lake, but actually settled in White Pigeon where the land office was opened. Abraham's son, Thomas, later settled in the

See **EDDIES**, page A3

Photo courtesy of Barbara Dempsey

Cody Edwards (left), a descendant of the Edwards family for whom the Village of Edwardsburg is named, recently met Tom Haikin during a visit to the Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum. Haikin, an Edwardsburg resident, wrote the book, "The Edwards Family of Edwardsburg: The Missing Namesakes," and gave Edwards an autographed copy.

Photo provided

A postcard of the Four Flags Hotel.

Historic milestone

Four Flags Hotel building turns 100

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — A Niles building that has sheltered thousands of guests over its storied history celebrated a historic milestone this Monday.

The Four Flags Hotel building, 404 E. Main St., turned 100 years old on Monday, July 6, 1926. Considered the most modern hotel in the area during the 1920s, it boasted 100 rooms and conveniences such as a grand Queen Anne Ballroom, a modern elevator and a telephone switchboard with a direct line to the Niles train depot. The hotel switchboard was one of the first of its kind installed by Michigan Bell in the 1920s and was one of the last of its kind operating in the state during the 1990s.

Today, the hotel is a residence hotel with 47 residential units of varying sizes rather than the original 100 rooms.

"For 100 years, the Four Flags Hotel has been part of the story of Downtown Niles," said Niles DDA Main Street Program Manager Lisa Croteau. "It welcomed famous guests like Eleanor Roosevelt, Knute Rockne, and Truman Capote, and has been the backdrop for countless memories. Today, known as 404 Main St, it continues to serve Niles with affordable housing. As we celebrate its Centennial, we're celebrating not just its history, but the important role it continues to play in our downtown."

According to historical records, Niles Hotel Corporation raised $350,000 to build a hotel on the site of the Pike House hostelry. Chicago architect Charles W. Nicol designed the hotel. Billed as a "fireproof" hotel, virtually all of the

See **FOUR FLAGS**, page A3

Niles resident nominated for Josie Music Awards

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — A Niles resident has been recognized by one of the biggest names in independent media for his work behind the microphone.

Justin Flagel has been nominated for the Josie Music Awards to be held Sept. 20 at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee. The Josie Music Awards, recognized as the largest and premier independent music awards globally, honors, recognizes and rewards excellence, outstanding talents across the independent music industry.

Flagel, who owns and operates Red Chuck Productions in downtown Niles, earned a nomination in the Media Company of the Year category for his podcast "Anywhere the Needle Drops," where Flagel chats with the musicians, artists and creative people making things happen in Michiana and beyond.

Photo courtesy of Ryan Blaske

Justin Flagel's podcast "Anywhere the Needle Drops" has been nominated for Media Company of the Year at the 12th annual Josie Music Awards.

"I started this show in 2012, which seems like a lifetime ago, in my parent's basement, interviewing a band I knew from high school," Flagel said. "That moment led me down so many roads as a journalist and a member of the music community. It feels great to be recognized, particularly on such a large level, because I've found a team and worked so hard to tell the stories of artists and musicians. I've dreamed since I was a child about being at an awards ceremony and now we're going to Nashville to hear the name of this thing we've built spoken before a full house at the Grand Ole Opry.

"It feels really special."

While Flagel is proud of the recognition, he

See **MUSIC**, page A3

EPS board to review Hall of Fame process

By JUSTIN FLAGEL
Leader correspondent

EDWARDSBURG — The Edwardsburg Public School Board held a brief meeting in July, forming a subcommittee to review the district Hall of Fame and finalize other business looking ahead to the next school year.

The Hall of Fame subcommittee will review policies and processes to better understand the entire process of nominations and the choosing inductees, as well as to increase awareness of the Hall of Fame. The subcommittee will review other school hall of fame models and discuss the admittance of those with achievements in athletics, academics, arts and contributions to the community.

According to the school district website, the current nomination process is open to graduates with excellence in academics or co-curricular activities, distinguished former staff members, and others whose actions or achievements are deserving of such recognition and honor.

The board paid invoices and approved several resolutions, designations, roles, memberships and policies as they looked ahead to the 2026/2027 school year. They also approved an audited amendment to the 2025/2026 Student Activities Fund due to a typographical error that was in the approval at the previous meeting.

Trustees approved

See **EPS**, page A3

Today's obituaries • Page A3

Ruby L. Wolverton
Janet Ruth Brezen
Leonard Pompey
Phyllis Joy Peterson
Arden Withers

Inside today's Herald-Palladium

Automotive	C6	Focus	B1	Opinion	B6
Business	C4	Food	B7	Puzzles	B4
Comics	B5	Home & Garden	C7	Television	D3

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FRANKLY

Tips and quips

What is Frankly? It is where readers sound off on issues of the day. Have a tip or a quip? Call Frankly at 269-687-7700 or email rich.cains@leaderpub.com.

■ Why is it so hard to get good shopping in our area? We have enough empty buildings to attract large brand name stores.

■ Welcome to Niles, PACE. This is great for the community.

■ I wish the 4th of July was a little less about politics and more about a celebration of all people past and present who have tried to make our country better.

■ I thought the Republican party was all about fiscal responsibility. We seem to have no problem wasting more money now than ever.

■ Hopefully the Four Flags Hotel can last another 100 years in Niles.

■ Social Security is at risk of having huge benefit cuts. How does the big beautiful bill sound now? No way should the wealthiest in the U.S. have received any tax cuts.

■ Okay, time to clean up the spent fireworks in the street. Thank you.

■ Congrats Red Chuck Productions on the Josie Award nom!

WEATHER

Today: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after noon. Patchy fog before 9am. Otherwise, partly sunny, with a high near 83. Calm wind becoming north around 5 mph in the afternoon.

Tonight: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 63. North wind 5 to 10 mph becoming light in the evening.

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 84. East wind around 5 mph.

Saturday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 62. Northeast wind around 5 mph becoming calm in the evening.

Sunday: Sunny, with a high near 86. Calm wind becoming east around 5 mph in the afternoon.

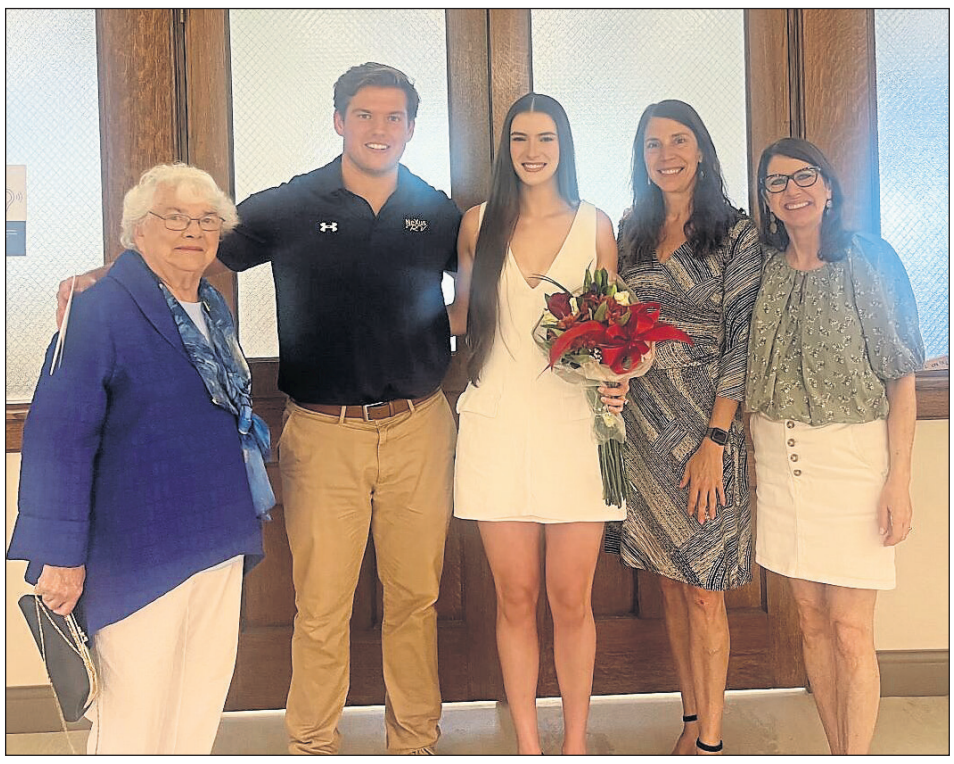
Sunday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 63.

Last-minute wedding allowed grandmother to witness nuptials

By PMG STAFF

Photos provided

Sophia Mick and Brock Donati, of Edwardsburg, were married at a spur-of-the-moment ceremony in Commissioners Chambers at the Cass County Historic Courthouse Administration Building on July 2.



CASS COUNTY — The Cass County Historic Courthouse Administration Building served as the setting for a uniquely international love story last week, as a young couple exchanged vows before their destination wedding in Italy.

Sophia Mick, 24, and Brock Donati, 23, of Edwardsburg, are getting married in Italy July 11, following in the footsteps of generations of Donati family members, including Brock's grandmother. The pair became engaged Aug. 2 of last year on a trip to Banff, and, after delving into wedding planning, realized the cost of marrying in Italy was comparable to marrying in the U.S.

There was just one problem: Brock's grandmother, who is aging, could not make the trip overseas.

"We knew that we had to get legally married here just to avoid the paperwork and transferring everything," Sophia said.

Brock added that his now-wife came up with the idea to have a quick wedding locally that Brock's grandmother could attend. Sophia and Brock arrived at the Clerk/Register of Deeds office Thursday afternoon hoping to get married but had misunderstood that they needed to have someone to officiate the wedding.

When Clerk/Register Monica McMichael learned that the couple's primary goal was ensuring Brock's grandmother could witness the wedding, she volunteered to officiate.

So, just after 1:30 p.m. on Thursday afternoon, the pair, their mothers and Brock's grandmother gathered in Commissioners Chambers to officially profess their love for one another. The 127-year-old building recently underwent significant renovations to restore the structure in a way that modernly serves the public, while also paying tribute to the original architecture.

After the brief ceremony, Brock and Sophia looked back on their relationship and the adventure that began right here in Cass County. The pair first met at age 16 through mutual friends staying on Eagle Lake. Their first date was at the Twisted Cow, a frozen yogurt shop just over the state line.

"She had to drive. I only had a driver's permit!" Brock said with a laugh.

The two remained friends when Brock went home to Chicago and Sophia finished high school at Edwardsburg. Then, in 2020, a twist of fate sent Brock back to Michiana, where he spent his senior year at Penn High School.

"By the grace of COVID, my family moved back up here for my senior year," Brock said.

Four days before his senior prom, the new kid in town did not have a date to the dance. A friend of his encouraged him to reach back out to Sophia, who he knew Brock had had a good date with a couple years earlier.

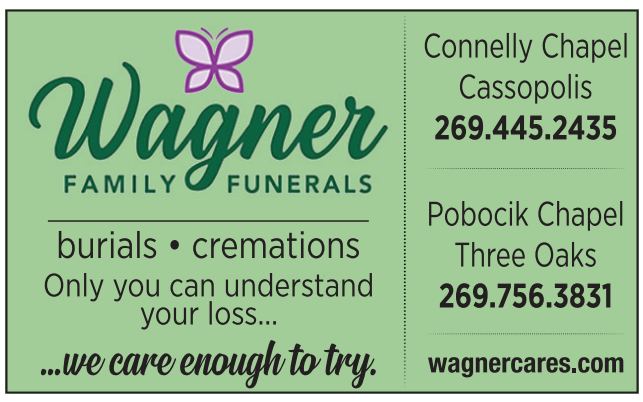
"She had a family dinner that night, and I was thinking, 'she's not going to be able to find a dress that fast. There's no way,'" Brock recalled.

Lo and behold, Sophia found a dress – and got permission from her grandmother to skip the meal.

Six years later, the pair have graduated from two Big Ten universities – Sophia from Michigan State University and Brock from Indiana University – established careers, become engaged in Canada and built a life together in Edwardsburg.

While the celebration will continue in Italy on July 11, Thursday's ceremony ensured the couple's marriage could be witnessed by one of the people who mattered most.

With family gathered inside the historic courthouse, the ceremony became more than a matter of paperwork. It marked the beginning of a marriage in the county where their story first began – and another memorable chapter in the history of one of Cass County's most treasured landmarks.



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BRANDYWINE

From page A1

Walker following his appointment to the same role at Ludington Area Schools.

Candidates also interviewed were Mary Brady, Director of Teaching and Learning – Elementary at Decatur Public Schools (Decatur, Ill.); Ryan Markel, High School Principal at Edwardsburg Public Schools; Jill VanDriessche, Assistant Superintendent at Plymouth Community School Corporation (Ind.) and Kory LaBonne, Director of Human Resources & School Safety at School City of Mishawaka (Ind.).

"We had excellent candidates," said Brandywine School Board President Jessica Crouch. "We had 12 altogether, we had six that we interviewed, and the top two stuck out to most of the board members. There were three really good candidates but the top two stuck out. We just felt like they were the right fit for Brandywine – our close-knit community. You could tell they loved our school district and they wanted to be a part of it."

Lezotte has a Master's in Educational Leadership and Administration from Grand Valley State University. She began her career at Brandywine, where she taught middle and high school English and History for 13 years. From there, she moved on to Berrien RESA where she served a variety of roles including Whole Child Consultant, School Improvement Facilitator and Academic Instructional Specialist. She was a Michigan Department of Education EWIMS Statewide Trainer for one year and has served as Brandywine's Assistant Superintendent of Instruction and Programs since 2023.

The process has been facilitated by the West Michigan Education Research and Development Foundation.

Three interviews were conducted Monday night and three Tuesday night. The board asked each candidate 16 questions, with the interviews being approximately 45 minutes in length. After the interviews were concluded, the board members chose the top two candidates moving onto the final round.

The community is invited to meet Lezotte at a meet and greet on Monday, July 13 at 5:30 p.m. in the Brandywine Middle/Senior High School Media Center. This informal session will provide an opportunity for staff, families and community members to engage with the finalist.

Following the meet and greet, the board will hold its regularly scheduled July meeting. At the conclusion of the meeting, Lezotte will present her initial 90-day plan and share how her professional experiences align with the district's leadership profile and goals.

The board anticipates the new superintendent will begin duties on Aug. 1.

"We're looking for someone who's extremely transparent to our stakeholders, our community members, our staff, and our students. Someone who's going to be out there in the community and show their face," Crouch said. "We're looking for someone who is very knowledgeable about our district. We're rolling out a new curriculum department and we have a big bond project that we need our superintendent to be a big part of."

MUSIC

From page A1

acknowledged that it would not have been possible without the support of friends, family and the local music scene.

"When we submitted to the Josies, it was for our entire body of work, but I think the evolution we've made in recent years was a huge factor," he said. "Paul Klimson and the crew at Theory One Studios have been handling technical duties so I can focus and grow in my work as a storyteller. We've leveled up in our guest list, with a mixture of local artist and major names I dreamed about interviewing as a kid coming on the show. We've added video and studio sessions with the SoulSeed project. I believe all of this factored in to making this our moment for the award nomination.

"And all of this was done with the support of so many friends and members of my family, not to mention to local music and art community. Everyone played a role."

FOUR FLAGS

From page A1

construction was poured concrete. The hotel was the first business to adopt the name "Four Flags" and served as the cultural center of Niles for most of the 20th Century. The hotel was managed by C.L. Holden and room rates were $2.00 and $3.50.

Hotel history

Niles has a long and rich history of hotels. In 1825, Congress approved funds to build a road along the old Sauk Trail connecting Detroit to Chicago. In 1829, Amanson Huston rented a log cabin, and the first tavern and meeting place in Niles was established. By 1831, Niles was a stage coach stop before crossing the St. Joseph River at Pawating Crossing and an important river boat stop before progressing on to St. Joseph, Michigan. Often, as many as 15 stage coaches per day arrived in Niles and the demand for hotels and taverns was great. Niles continued to grow up the Main Street hill, and hotels like the Michigan Inn, the American Hotel, and the Union Hotel began to fill the town with excitement and travelers.

In 1867, the Pike Hotel was built on the corner of Main and Fourth Streets, the present location of the Four Flags Hotel. Owned by Horace Pike, the three-story brick hotel housed many famous people and was in operation until 1922.

At that time, the desire for a newer, more modern hotel was felt by a group of Niles businessmen. The Niles Hotel Corporation was formed, and in 1926, the Four Flags Hotel became a reality. The hotel hosted famous figures including Eleanor Roosevelt, Knute Rockne, Truman Capote and many visiting Notre Dame opponents. On July 20, 1926, Fred Green became the first politician to give a speech at the Four Flags and later became Governor of Michigan. In 1927 screen actor Herbert Rawlinson reported on his experiences while in Niles. Charles Renner, proprietor of the Four Flags from 1928 to 1931, was also a member of the "Rough Rider" regiment of the 1st United States Volunteer Cavalry led by Col. Theodore Roosevelt at San Juan Hill during the Spanish-American War.

On August 28, 1929, many Niles residents went to the Four Flags Hotel roof to watch the "Graf Zeppelin" fly over on its historical trip around the world.

'We had a lot of fun'

Few people know the ins and outs of the hotel more than Terry Redman, who owned the Four Flags Hotel from 1984 to 1994 with his wife Sandi. Redman, a former Niles school teacher, said he purchased the hotel following a chance encounter with the owner.

"I was standing on the street corner of 4th and Main and the owner came out and said, 'What are you doing?' And I said, 'I'm just standing here alive.' He says, 'Oh, I thought you might be interested in buying this.' And I said, 'No, well, wait a minute,'" Redman recalled. "It was all downhill from there."

Redman had fond memories of attending Sunday buffets in the hotel's Queen Anne Room, which inspired him to restore the hotel back to the way that it was when he was growing up.

"That meant Sunday brunches, plays, and activities in the Queen Anne Room," he said. "We had Optimist Club, Rotary and another service club meeting there every week. We had the Queen Anne Room, we had the restaurant going, had a cab company and an answering service company."

A former youth baseball coach, Redman said there were times he would bring his teams to the hotel to practice there.

"I was also a coach of the Babe Ruth baseball team, and we had practice in the Queen Anne Room," he said. "I had made a plywood pitching mound, and so we practiced pitching in the Queen Anne Room."

Another memory that resonated with Redman was a graffiti incident involving local youth.

"We painted the outside of the building white along the alley and a couple days later, it had graffiti all over it. My wife at that time was a teacher at Ring Lardner School. We passed out the word to the Ring Lardner students that a teacher at this school owns the hotel. We never had any graffiti after that," he joked.

Redman, who currently lives in Florida, enjoyed owning a part of Niles history and the community's support of the building.

"It was a good time, a good 10 years," he said. "We had a lot of fun."

EDDIES

From page A1

Pleasant Lake area, selling goods from a shanty. He referenced the settlement as 'Edwardsburgh,' and became its first postmaster.

Thomas' brother, Alexander, also soon moved to 'Edwardsburgh,' platting the village in 1831. The plat was approved by the Michigan Territorial Council, of which Abraham Edwards was president, along with a request that the village be named 'Edwardsburgh.'The 'h' was dropped from the name in 1845.

The museum tour was followed by a short jaunt to Lake Street at U.S. 12, where Pleasant Lake is visible and near where Thomas and Alexander Edwards resided A fascinating fact: Cody's father, Lowell; his grandfather, Benjamin, and his great-grandfather, Charles Edwards, all were postmasters, just like Thomas Edwards.

"At one time, I considered going into the postal service, and kind of felt bad that I ended that tradition," said Cody, who is a digital creator.

"I follow the Edwardsburg Facebook, page, followed the mural (painting) and the museum's Facebook page. The visit was great because (of) Pleasant Lake, I saw it and it makes it more real," he said.

EPS

From page A1

substitute pay rates for clerical and food service aid to maintain compliance with minimum wage laws and set substitute teacher rates at $125 per day, the same amount as the previous school year. Superintendent Dr. Courtney Szucs noted that Edwardsburg maintains competitive substitute rates in comparison with other local districts and rarely has trouble attracting substitutes to the district. The board also voted to approve the hire of a new English teacher at the high school.

Szucs also reported to the board regarding the state budget.

"We're happy to have a budget, but it's lacking in a number of areas," Szucs said, noting funds diverted to higher education and a funding that does not keep up with inflation.

Voters in the school district will be receiving information regarding the annual millage non-homestead renewal, which will affect businesses and second-home owners. The election was adjusted to be scheduled along with regular elections to avoid costing taxpayers additional funds with special elections. The election will take place with the regular election cycle this year on Aug. 4.

OBITUARIES

Death notices

Arden Withers, 81, of Dowagiac, died July 9, 2026, Wagner Family Funerals, Cassopolis.

Ruby L. Wolverton, 92, of Dowagiac, died July 4, 2026, at Dowagiac. Wagner Family Funerals, Cassopolis.

Janet Ruth Brezen

January 17, 1932 – June 29, 2026

Janet (Hoinville) Brezen, of Dowagiac, Michigan, passed away peacefully at the age of 94 on June 29, 2026, surrounded by family at the home of her youngest daughter in Evanston, IL.

Janet was born on January 17, 1932, in South Bend, Indiana to parents – John (Recer) Hoinville, an immigrant from Austria-Hungary, and Helen (Spensley) Hoinville. Janet attended grade school in Galien, Michigan before her family moved to Cassopolis, Michigan where her father owned and ran the Cassopolis Dairy. Janet graduated from Cassopolis High School and attended Michigan State College (now Michigan State University) where she was an active member of the Chi Omega Sorority.

Upon graduating MSC in 1954 with an English degree, Janet became an English teacher at Cassopolis High School. Two years later, she married Robert E. Brezen of Dowagiac, and had two daughters – Tamara and Nancy. Once the girls were older, Janet returned to teaching as a substitute teacher at the Dowagiac and Cassopolis High Schools in their English Departments. She left teaching eventually to become a licensed casualty and life insurance agent and worked alongside Robert in his business at the Dowagiac Insurance Center.

Gardening and landscape design were two of Janet's defining passions. Active in the Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan, she served on the State Board as a State Committee Chairman and as a Landscape Design Master Consultant. She was a longtime member and past President of Town & Country Garden Club and a Charter Member and past President of the Michiana Landscape Design Study Club. She also served as co-Chairman of the Landscape Design School held at Buchanen's Fernwood Botanical Garden in 2001 and 2002.

Her lifelong passion for gardening inspired travel to Europe to tour some of their esteemed gardens, including Sissinghurst, Hidcote, and Giverny, and to attend the Chelsea Flower Show. Janet's own beautiful garden was a reflection of her talent and love of flowers and brought her immense joy throughout her life.

Janet served for two years on the Dowagiac City Parks & Recreation Committee before becoming a Charter Member of the first President of the Riverside Cemetery Board of Directors where she ultimately served for over 30 years. She also volunteered at the Dowagiac Area History Museum.

Janet is preceded in death by her husband – Robert E. Brezen, of Dowagiac; sisters – Jean Pascoe, of Carmel, IN and Judith Hayden of Niles, MI; brother – John Hoinville, of Niles; grandson – Thomas Robert Block of Highland Park, IL. She is survived by her two daughters – Tamara (Martin) Block of Highland Park, IL and Nancy (Brian) Lowry of Evanston, IL; and her four beloved grandchildren – Nicholas and Stephanie Block and Breton and Robert Lowry.

Friends may visit with the family from 10:30AM to 12:00PM on Saturday, July 18, at Clark Chapel – Starks Family Funeral Home, 405 Center St., Dowagiac. Janet will be buried at Riverside Cemetery, Dowagiac next to her husband and her grandson under a canopy of dogwoods that she so loved. To share a memory or message of condolence, please visit Janet's personalized webpage at www.clarkch.com.

Phyllis Joy Peterson

July 23, 1948 – July 6, 2026

Phyllis Joy Petersen, age 77, of Dowagiac, passed away peacefully in the presence of her husband on Monday, July 6, 2026. She was born to Stanley and Bernice (Brasseur) Szocinski on July 23, 1948 in Cheyboygan, Michigan.

Phyllis graduated from Saint John High School in 1966. She went on to earn a Bachelors degree in history from Aquinas College in 1970. She married the love of her life, Michael John Petersen in 1969 at Saint John The Evangelist Catholic Church in Jackson, Michigan in a candle light service. Phyllis taught early elementary at Sister Lakes Elementary School for twenty-eight years. She was very involved in church activities and became a Dominican Associate. Phyllis and Mike loved to sing in church and community choirs.

She loved to travel. After traveling with family throughout the United States, she and Mike then explored Europe many times. She also volunteered at the Dowagiac Area History Museum and was active in the Saint Paul's Food Pantry. Phyllis loved her family and took great pride in her grandchildren.

Phyllis will be greatly missed by family and friends. She is survived by her husband, Michael John Petersen of Dowagiac; two sons, Joseph (Julie) Petersen of Quincy, Ohio, Jeffrey (Heidi) Petersen of Kentwood, Michigan; four grandchildren, Scott Petersen, Noel Petersen, Henry Petersen, Brooklynn Petersen; two sisters, Rosanne Szocinski OP of Grand Rapids, Mary Jane (Mitchel) Martz of Parma, Michigan; one brother, Stanley (JoAnne) Szocinski of Auburndale, Florida and many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents.

Family and friends will gather Saturday, July 11, 2026 one hour prior to her Mass of Christian Burial at 11:00 a.m. in St. Ann Catholic Church 421 North Broadway, Cassopolis, Michigan. Phyllis will be laid to rest in Riverside Cemetery in Dowagiac.

The family prefers contributions be made in memory of Phyllis, to Grand Rapids Dominicans, 111 Lakeside Drive North East, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503 or Aquinas College, 1607 Robinson Road South, East Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506 or Dowagiac Union Schools Foundation, 243 South Front Street Dowagiac, Michigan 49047 or Dowagiac Area History Museum, 201 East Division Dowagiac, Michigan 49047.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.

Leonard Pompey

February 15, 1938 – July 7, 2026

Leonard Leroy Pompey "Lonnie" was born in Dowagiac on February 15th, 1938, to Edith Gillam and Charles Conner. He was later adopted by Max Pompey. He is survived by three sons, Anthony "Tony" Pompey, Garry (Jessica) Pompey both of Cassopolis, Norman Pompey of Florida and one daughter, Lonni Pompey of Florida.

He leaves to miss him, ten grandchildren, Shawnta, Symone, TJ, Jamie, Tyler, Calrissian, Christopher, Tyler, Damion, and Aleia and Eight great-grandchildren, Evan, Nathaniel, Alexander, Sutton, Finn, Vienna, Obi and Gia. Sandra Larkin, second wife and mother of Garry and Lonni will also miss him. He is preceded in death by his first wife Margaret Bialas beloved mother of Tony and Norman, his parents, numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins, also preceding him in death were his five brothers, Robert and Paul Conner, Edward and Lynden Syx, and Max Pompey Jr.

Lonnie was a great athlete, running track, playing football and basketball in high school before graduating from Dowagiac Union High School in 1956. He held numerous athletic records and then went on to box in the Navy, where he served twenty years as a hospital corpsman before retiring in 1975. After that, he earned a bachelor's degree from Western Michigan University teaching second and seventh grades for 15 years for Dowagiac Public Schools.

He loved sports, catching the largest bass in the lake and winning golf tournaments. He was a man of few words, but when he spoke, we listened. Lonnie loved his family and will be greatly missed.

Family and friends will gather Friday, July 17, 2026 one hour prior to his service at 11:00 a.m. in Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, 202 North Broadway Street, Cassopolis.

The family prefers contributions in memory of Lonnie be made to Cassopolis VFW Post 10704 Lt. William Lee Mozier 131 South Broadway, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com

Obituary policy

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BOARD OF HEALTH

On the lookout for 'tiny parasite'

Berrien health officials cautious as cyclosporiasis cases are on the rise

By LOUISE WREGE
Paxton Media Group

"It's a very, very tiny parasite. You can't see it with the naked eye. It infects your small intestine and that causes, usually, loose or watery stools that can be quite painful and disruptive."

GUY MILLER
Berrien County Health Officer

BENTON HARBOR — An intestinal illness caused by a parasite is on the rise in Michigan, with almost 1,000 cases confirmed in the state, according to Berrien County Health Officer Guy Miller.

No cases of cyclosporiasis, which is caused by a parasite called cyclospora, have been reported in Berrien County, Miller told members of the Berrien County Board of Health on Wednesday.

"It's a very, very tiny parasite. You can't see it with the naked eye," Miller said. "It infects your small intestine and that causes, usually, loose or watery stools that can be quite painful and disruptive."

Miller said people are infected by eating food that contains the parasite, with previous outbreaks linked to bagged salad mixes, fresh cilantro or basil, raspberries or scallions.

"If you can heat something to 158 degrees Fahrenheit, that will kill the parasite," he said.

He said produce should be run under clean water, even if it is going to be peeled.

"Even if it's watermelon that you plan on slicing, run it under water because whatever is on the outside of that watermelon, when you cut it with a knife, it can go into the inside of the watermelon unless the watermelon is clean," he said. "... If you are immunocompromised, diarrheal illnesses can be pretty severe."

Miller said it's important for people with any diarrhea illnesses to stay hydrated.

"Drink plenty of water. Electrolytes are important as well," he said.

Miller said there have been one to two cases of cyclosporiasis each year since 2023, with most of them associated with international travel.

There are typically about 50 cases of cyclosporiasis each year in the state, according to Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

MDHHS reported the number of cases has risen from 170 on June 30 to 992 on Wednesday, with the highest number of cases on the Southeast side of the state.

MDHHS is working with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to find the source of the outbreak.

The time between being exposed and becoming sick can range from two days to two weeks or more, according to the MDHHS.

Food is safest when it's cooked, according to the MDHHS. Recommendations include:

- Lettuce: Buy whole heads of lettuce rather than bagged lettuce, throw away the outer two to three layers of leaves and wash the inner leaves under running water.
- Cilantro, basil: Wash under running water, separating leaves.
- Green onions: Trim root end, remove the outer layer and wash thoroughly under water.
- Raspberries: Safest when cooked due to their bumpy surface making them hard to clean. Freezing does not guarantee elimination of the parasite.
- Snow peas: Wash under running water and rub the surface.

Reminders about routine food safety practices from MDHHS are:

- Wash hands with soap and water before and after handling or preparing food.
- Scrub firm fruits and vegetables, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush.
- Cut away any damaged or bruised areas on fruits and vegetables before preparing and eating.
- Wash and sanitize utensils and surfaces before and after handling food. Wash and sanitize display cases and refrigerators where fresh produce is stored.
- Wash and sanitize cutting boards, surfaces and utensils used to prepare, serve or store fresh produce.
- Refrigerate cut, peeled or cooked fruits and vegetables as soon as possible.

Contact: lwrege@TheHP.com, 932-0361, Twitter: @HPWrege

25 animals seized from Pokagon Township home in 'deplorable' conditions

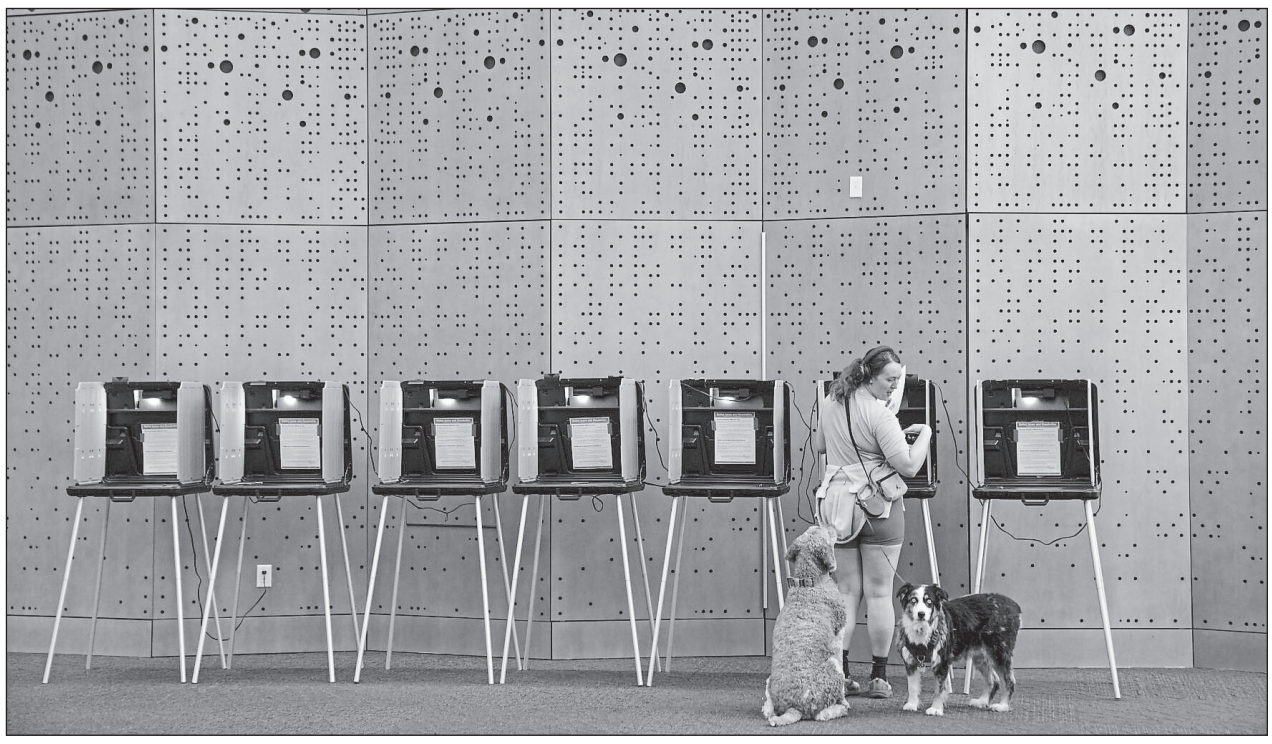
By PMG STAFF

POKAGON TOWNSHIP — 25 animals living in what police described as "deplorable" conditions were discovered during a search warrant in Pokagon Township on Tuesday, according to the Cass County Sheriff's Office.

The Animal Control Division and deputies executed a search warrant in the 29000 block of Lyle Drive in Pokagon Township. They seized four dogs and 21 cats from the residence all suffering from neglect.

"Lack of veterinarian care, grooming and living in deplorable conditions caused these animals to suffer," the department's news release stated.

During the course of the investigation the owners were identified and officers will be requesting charges with the Cass County Prosecutor's Office. The suspect's names are being withheld pending arraignment on the charges. The investigation is still on going at this time.



Rebecca Slezak / AP

Danielle Grisolano brings her dogs Lincoln and Pepper with her to vote in the Democratic primaries at Denver Public Library on June 30 in Denver.

Administration pressuring states to change election practices

By GEOFF MULVIHILL and MARC LEVY
Associated Press

President Donald Trump's administration is threatening to withhold some federal funding from states that don't make changes to voting practices and is warning state election officials that they face arrest if they don't remove noncitizens from voter rolls.

Letters to states and grant application details are the latest in a line of actions by Trump's administration to shape details of running elections that have long been the job of states.

Courts have largely rejected the administration's previous efforts, which reflect untrue claims about widespread voting fraud and come less than four months ahead of crucial midterm elections where Democrats seek to take control of one or both chambers of Congress and check Trump's power.

"The overall point is that Trump is trying to use whatever levers of power and persuasive power that he might have to try to interfere with how states and localities are going to conduct the 2026 election," said Rick Hasen, a UCLA law professor and the director of the Safeguarding Democracy Project. "Some of this is aimed at changing how the rules are conducted. Some of it appears to be aimed at undermining voter confidence in the integrity of the election process."

Justice Department warns election officials of prosecution

In letters sent Tuesday, to election officials for all 50 states and the District of Columbia – often secretaries of state – the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division said they and other election administrators could face criminal charges if they knowingly allow nonvoters to vote or remain on voting rolls.

It also called on the states to tell the federal government within five days how they intend to comply with the law.

Derek Muller, a law professor at the University of Notre Dame who specializes in election law, said it's not clear the 50-state letter means anything except to restate some parts of the law, with a request to follow up, "which I'm sure many states will ignore."

The letter also warns that anyone who knowingly and willfully gives false information in registering to vote or voting would face criminal prosecution.

Robert Weiner, director of the voting rights project for the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, said the rate of voting by noncitizens is "infinitesimally small," and he suggested the government's actions are motivated by factors other than securing elections.

"I predict that the president is trying to create chaos and then use that chaos to take drastic measures in states that oppose his policies or to refuse to recognize the results of the elections in those states," Weiner said.

Antiterrorism grants include election requirements

A Federal Emergency Management Agency antiterrorism grant announcement in June includes a list of election-related requirements, saying that 20 percent of grants for states and urban areas would be withheld until they comply.

The program includes more than $1 billion for states and local and tribal governments for a variety of programs aimed at preventing terror at crowded places, online, with border security – and around elections. FEMA expects to award 56 grants.

"Recipients can ensure that their efforts contribute to a secure, transparent, and resilient electoral process, thereby reinforcing public trust and the integrity of democratic institutions," the grant announcement says, noting that securing election infrastructure is a national security priority.

The list of items for states includes verifying the citizenship of all registered voters and election workers.

Places that use electronic voting systems that use bar codes or QR codes to count votes would have to submit plans to switch to hand-marked paper ballots. Every jurisdiction would have to show it audits results.

UCLA's Hasen said it could be difficult even for states that want to comply. It's too close to the midterm election to make some of the changes, he said, and some would require state legislatures to pass new laws.

The White House on Wednesday referred questions to FEMA, which did not immediately respond to an interview request.

Response from states appears to be partisan

Some states are pushing back, while others are defending the latest actions.

They seem to be breaking along party lines.

Oregon's secretary of state, Democrat Tobias Read, accused the Justice Department of "knocking on our door again with more threats and no evidence to back up their fever dreams about non-existent voter fraud."

Oregon elections are secure, accurate, and fair, he said, adding that he isn't "intimidated by political threats or manufactured controversy."

The Michigan secretary of state's office, headed by Democrat Jocelyn Benson, said it has discussed its work repeatedly with the Justice Department and in public statements, congressional hearings and court testimony – information that it said "is either in the DOJ's possession or easy reach."

"We will be happy to provide it again to help address any confusion," the office said in a statement.

In a statement, Ohio Republican Secretary of State Frank LaRose defended the Justice Department's missive to states, saying it's reminding them of their legal obligation regarding election integrity. A lot of states aren't taking it seriously, he said without giving examples or citing evidence. He said Ohio has worked with the federal government to ensure that its voter rolls are accurate and that only U.S. citizens vote.

Georgia's secretary of state's office says the state has already taken many of the actions required in the FEMA grant, including a citizenship audit of voter rolls.

Several of Trump's election actions have faced resistance

Trump has repeatedly and wrongly asserted that fraud cost him reelection in 2020, and his administration has put forth a series of policies and actions aimed at how elections are run.

In recent days, courts have rejected the Justice Department's effort to collect the names and contact information for every election worker in Georgia in the 2020 election and others trying to force New Hampshire and Pennsylvania to turn over detailed information about registered voters. With those rulings, the federal government has lost similar cases more than 10 times around its requests for details from 30 states and the District of Columbia.

Last week, a group of Democratic governors asked the U.S. Postal Service to withdraw its proposed rule seeking to implement an order from Trump to create a list of eligible voters – and potentially limit who can receive a ballot in the mail. A court previously put the order on hold, saying it was unconstitutional.

Also last week, the Supreme Court rebuked Trump and ruled that states can count mailed ballots that arrive after Election Day.

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OPINION

Reading for pleasure builds empathy in children

However, fewer children are picking up books just for the fun of it

By WILLIAM DEE NICHOLS
Professor of Literacy, Language and Culture, University of Maine
and MICHELLE KEARNEY
Professor of Literacy, University of Maine (The Conversation)

THE CONVERSATION

Reading allows children to live in a vibrant world, surrounded by fairies, elves and talking animals, transporting them to places where the impossible becomes real. But reading for pleasure also helps children learn more effectively and broadens how they view, interpret and interact with the world. It gives them a form of expression that fuels their imagination and empathy for themselves and others.

But the percentage of children who read for fun is declining.

Just 37 percent of 9-year-olds and 14 percent of 13-year-olds read for fun almost every day in 2025, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress. By middle school, just 1 in 7 kids say they read for pleasure each day.

The U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics has also tracked declines in kids and teens who read for fun, finding that in 2023, 14 percent of 13-year-olds read for fun each day, down from 27 percent who said they did so in 2012.

Slightly younger kids tend to read for pleasure a bit more. Approximately 39 percent of 9-year-olds said they read for fun in 2022, down from 53 percent of 9-year-olds who said they did so in 2012, according to the Department of Education.

This trend is showing up alongside another concern: stagnant reading scores, especially among teenagers. It's tempting to treat those as separate problems. But as scholars of literacy, we don't think they are.

Reading for fun isn't just about fun

Outside of schoolwork, a child can read anywhere from as few as 100,000 words per year to 10 million or more for the most voracious readers.

This gap can help explain why some children's vocabularies grow so much faster than others.

Kids absorb words from context, over and over, across thousands of pages. One of us, for example, has a son named Andrew, who, at the age of 2, once absorbed and correctly used the word "viaduct," without anyone defining it for him, after he encountered it in a book about trains.

Older kids and teenagers who describe themselves as committed readers tend to have families that read to them since they were young, kept books around as their interests changed and made reading together a genuine priority.

A well-selected book, in particular, has the ability to enhance a child's reading pleasure and reading ability, allowing them to see and feel the world with fresh insight.

Research shows a connection between teenagers who read for pleasure as young children: They tend to score higher on cognitive tests that measure verbal learning, memory and speech development.

Reading for pleasure can also help build vocabulary and reading fluency while enhancing focus.

Reading to develop empathy

There are other benefits to reading that won't show up on a reading assessment.

We believe that reading is empathy operating in its simplest form: imagining your way into someone else's experience and understanding the ripple effects of their actions.

Reading for pleasure, especially the kind that starts on a parent's or caregiver's lap, is one of the earliest and most reliable places kids get repeated practice doing that complex work.

Reading with a caregiver often progresses into children reading on their own, whether with a flashlight in bed or in the middle of the day on the couch.

When children become immersed in a book series on their own, in particular, it can help them develop connections with characters they grow to know, love or scorn. They inhabit a character who isn't them. They sit with an idea long enough to understand why someone acts the way they do.

Feeling emotionally invested in a character's decisions can also influence how young readers decide how to engage with others and treat people with civility and kindness in real life.

This skill doesn't arrive automatically with age. It is built through practice, and recreational reading in childhood is the main training ground for it.

Implications for school and home

Within the past 10 years, many schools have invested in evidence-based reading instruction, with a renewed emphasis in phonics instruction to improve students' reading proficiency.

This shift has been an important and necessary step in helping students develop the foundational skills they need to become successful readers. At the same time, some classrooms have had fewer opportunities for independent reading and reading simply for enjoyment.

In 2024, literacy researcher Chase Young recalled asking a second grader whether a classroom reading activity had made him a better reader. The child responded, "No, because it's fun."

Already, that young student senses that fun and learning have been filed into separate categories at school. This highlights the real cost of letting effective instruction and engaging instruction drift apart, as though a teacher must choose between them.

This doesn't mean abandoning structured reading instruction, which matters enormously for students who are learning to decode written language by connecting sounds and symbols. It means reading a book that a child actually chose, rereading an old favorite, and allotting time for a teacher to read aloud purely because it brings joy to the class.

This effort extends outside of a classroom. When children live in homes where they see books around, where their parents and siblings read together, and where their caregivers also read for fun, they are likely to see reading as enjoyable and not an item on a to-do list.

People who enjoyed reading as children are more likely to read books every day as an adult.

We each read to our children from when they were young and watched as they grew and developed their own love of books, ranging from the "Fantastic Four" comic series to the "Harry Potter" and "The Hunger Games" series.

Another one of us, Dee, has a daughter named Addie who remains an avid reader in her early 20s. She is currently reading the "Court of Thorns and Roses" fantasy series, among others.

And Andrew, the 2-year-old who once learned the word "viaduct" from a book, is still an avid reader. At 18, his shelves are now filled with manga and comic books, including a special section for "JoJo's Bizarre Adventure." His choice of genre and formats has evolved over the years, but his joy of getting lost in a story has not.

That's the version of reading we'd like more kids to fall in love with – before school, however well meaning, might convince them that fun and learning have to live in different places.

William Dee Nichols is a professor of Literacy, Language and Culture at University of Maine. Michelle Kearney is a rrofessor of Literacy at University of Maine.

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All letters should include a daytime telephone number and street address for verification.

Letters must be 500 words or fewer. Letters relating to candidates and ballot issues in upcoming elections will be limited to 300 words.

Letters must be of general public interest. All letters must be the original work of the authors. Form letters will not be accepted. In most cases, a writer whose letter is published must wait one month before having another letter published.

Leader Publications reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, grammar, inappropriate content and libel.

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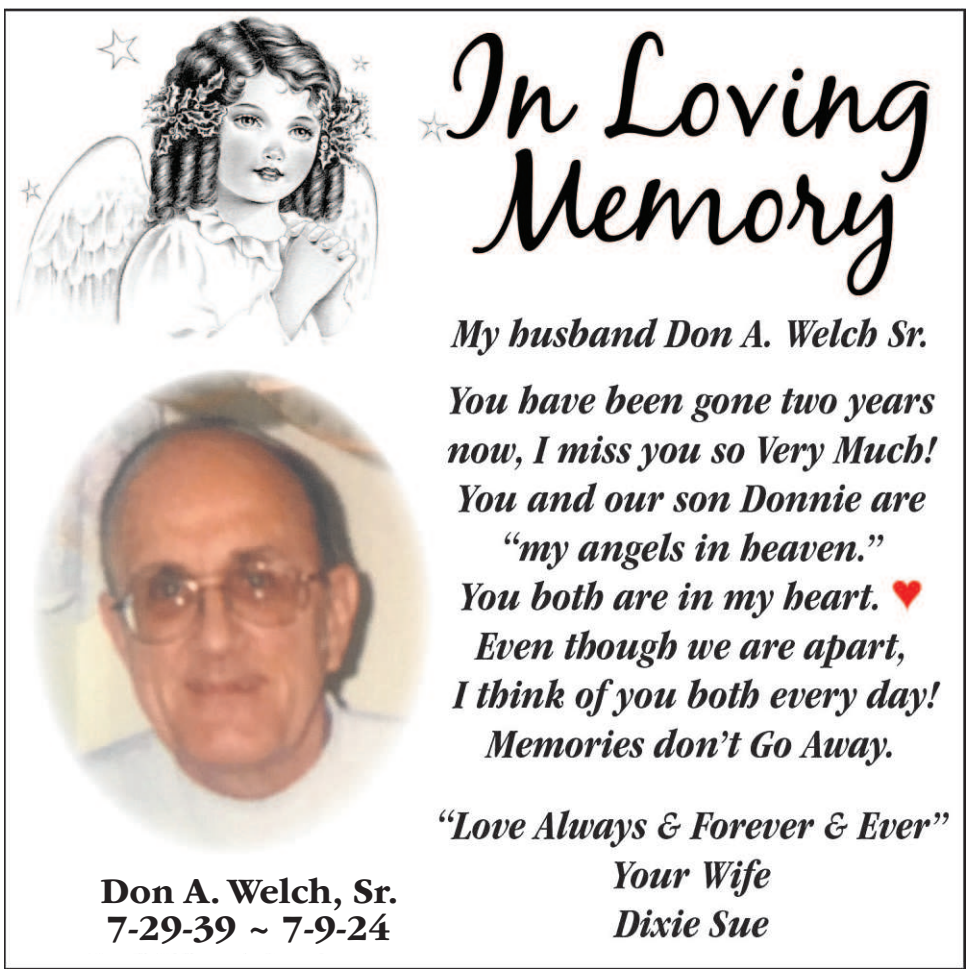
In Loving Memory
My husband Don A. Welch Sr.
You have been gone two years now, I miss you so Very Much!
You and our son Donnie are "my angels in heaven."
You both are in my heart.
Even though we are apart, I think of you both every day!
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Your Wife
Dixie Sue
Don A. Welch, Sr.
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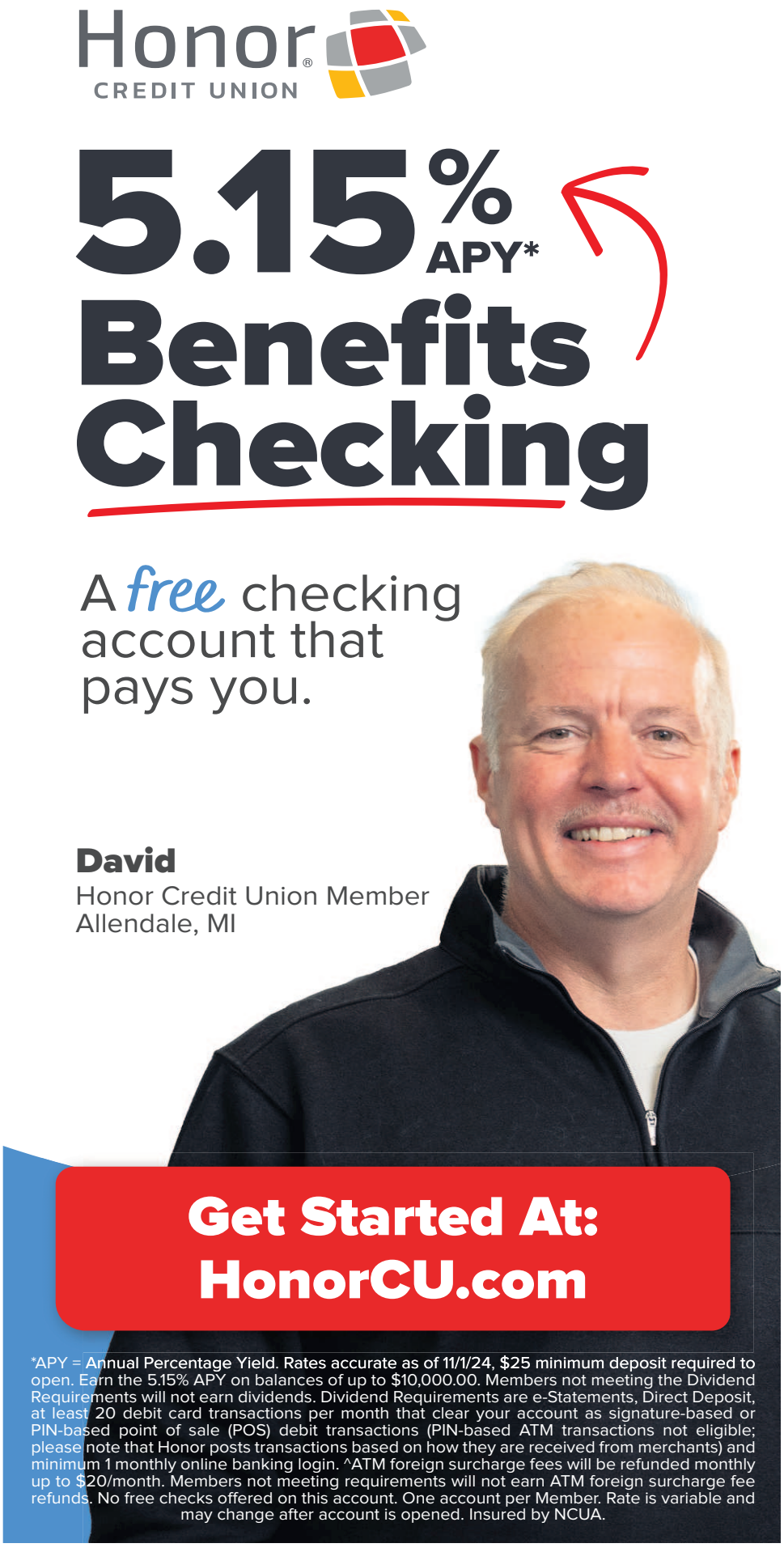
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Alliance Cloud Services Inc.

HYPERSCALE DATA®

To Our Neighbors in Dowagiac:

My name is William Horne, and I am the CEO of Hyperscale Data, the parent company of Alliance Cloud Services.

I enlisted in the Marine Corps out of high school and served four years in an infantry combat unit before being honorably discharged as a sergeant. I put myself through college while working full time and raising a family. I know what it is like to live paycheck to paycheck, and I have spent my life believing in what this country can build when it invests in its own people.

That belief is why we came to Dowagiac, and why we are still here.

For a century, the facility at 415 E Prairie Ronde Street was the kind of place that defined a community. It was a hub of heavy industrial manufacturing, home to companies like Rudy Furnace, Modine and National Copper Products, and nearly 1,000 people worked there at its peak. By the time we arrived in 2021, it sat largely dormant. But we saw something worth investing in, and for five years now Alliance Cloud Services has done exactly that, acquiring the facility, putting it back to work and hiring locally.

In recent months, however, we have heard concerns from some residents about sound levels in the area. We take those concerns seriously, because we care about the people who live here and because being a good neighbor has mattered to us since the day we arrived.

That is why when Mayor Bakeman and city leadership reached out to discuss the same concerns, we welcomed it. That kind of direct, constructive engagement is what good neighbors do, and we intend to keep doing it.

Prior to those conversations, our facility was already undergoing a planned operational transition. As part of that transition, legacy equipment will be phased out and removed over the next several months. New cooling units will be added, operating on a fully closed-loop system that continuously recirculates with no ongoing draw on Dowagiac's water infrastructure. These systems cost more than the alternatives, but we chose them because protecting this community's resources is worth the investment. And the 48 acres of forested land we acquired will provide a long-term natural buffer between our facility and the surrounding area.

As we plan the next chapter of our operations here, we remain mindful of the people who live nearby, and this transition reflects that.

Everything we are doing is part of a long-term commitment to build something that becomes a genuine part of this community's future. And that future is something I am proud to share with you.

We have partnered with one of the world's most advanced robotics manufacturers to bring their technology to the United States for the first time. More than 100,000 square feet of the facility will be dedicated to training next-generation robots, and the data behind that work will be processed and stored right here, not sent overseas.

We will tap into Michigan's industrial muscle memory to assist in the assembly, programming, training and testing of robots, in addition to logistics and operations. Over the next three years, our investment and operation are projected to create up to 500 jobs — opening up new opportunities and career pathways right here in Dowagiac.

As we move forward, I want to speak directly to our closest neighbors. For any resident who lives on Louise Avenue adjacent to our facility who would prefer to move but feels financially unable to, we are prepared to purchase your home at fair market value and help with the cost of moving.

I am committed to open communication with this community, and I want to hear from you. Please feel free to email our team at neighbor@alliancecloudservices.com or call 269-390-0845.

We have been proud to call Dowagiac home for five years. What we are building represents a significant and growing investment in this community's economic future, and we are honored to be building it alongside you.

William Horne
CEO, Hyperscale Data

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MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

Being the best

Photos by Don Campbell / HP staff

Niles' Brenden Olsen is the 2026 Herald-Palladium Senior Male Athlete of the Year.

Niles' Brenden Olsen believes lessons he's learned from sports will help him in life

By MAXWELL HARDEN
Paxton Media Group

NILES — One of the most decorated athletes in Niles High School history has added another honor to his long list of accomplishments.

Brenden Olsen, Niles' 6-foot-7 three-sport standout, capped a brilliant four-year high school career by being named The Herald-Palladium 2026 Senior Male Athlete of the Year. Olsen is the first Viking to earn the award since Tim Gourlay in 1980.

"It's a blessing," Olsen said. "It's definitely a great opportunity just to be acknowledged by the people around us. I don't even know how to explain it ... just being given the opportunity to be my best and have people watch me at my best is a blessing. I'm going to come out and do what I do on the field and off the field, because it's not only an award for being an athlete, but it's also a scholarship thing. What I do in the classroom and outside of the classroom is a mix of both. I'm just blessed to be the Athlete of the Year."

See **OLSEN**, page B2

Niles' Brenden Olsen takes a moment after stealing second during a regional semifinal against Vicksburg last month in Stevensville.

Rebecca Blackwell / AP

Mo'ne Davis fields a ball during a Women's Pro Baseball League (WPBL) practice on March 18 in Fort Myers, Fla.

Women's pro baseball league unveils team nicknames, logos

By ALANIS THAMES
Associated Press

Women's pro baseball is back.

The Women's Professional Baseball League on Wednesday unveiled the nicknames and logos of its four teams ahead of its inaugural season, with each team name inspired by pioneering women.

Kelsie Whitmore, the star pitcher who was the first overall pick in the WPBL's inaugural draft, will play for the San Francisco Firebells. Mo'ne Davis, the history-making former Little League sensation, will play center field for the Los Angeles Queens, along with veteran Japanese pitcher Ayami Sato.

There's also the New York Heights and the Boston Hunters.

See **BASEBALL**, page B2

Steve's Run returns to Dowagiac on July 17

By JOHN EBY
Southwestern Michigan College

DOWAGIAC — The 52nd running of the Original Road and Trail Race takes place at 6 p.m. Friday, July 17, downtown on the eve of the Dowagiac Summer Festival.

The Summer Festival takes place from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday, July 18, featuring live music, a kids waterpark, food vendors, a beer garden, artisan booths and sidewalk sales.

July 17 "will be Festival Friday," said Manager of Development and Executive Director of the SMC Foundation Emily Schrock, who also serves on the Greater Dowagiac Chamber board. "That features sidewalk sales, restaurant specials and businesses hosting fun activities and promotions."

Steve's Run packet pickup and late registration take place from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday on campus at the Student Activity Center off Dailey Road and on race day from 4 to 5:30 at the train station, 200 Depot Drive.

"Last year we had 326," Schrock said, "which, of course, draws even more family and friends to watch the event. We're hoping for perfect weather that day."

"What makes Steve's Run so special is the way it connects people for a greater purpose. Every participant, volunteer and sponsor plays a role in supporting cancer research and helping students pursue their educational goals. We're honored to be part of an event that continues to strengthen our community year after year," said Kelly Williams, Regional Manager, Honor Credit Union.

"We're excited to have Honor Credit Union as our presenting sponsor this year, as well as welcoming back other sponsors, like Cairn Stone Adventure Tours, the bib sponsor," Schrock said. "We're grateful for sponsors like Bud Distributing, Imperial Furniture, Baker's Rhapsody, Slope and Bakeman Barbers."

"We're thankful for our donors and participants who help us to continue to put on this community event to raise money for both cancer research and the David and Steven Briegel Memorial Scholarship," Schrock said. "We're grateful to continue the tradition."

In 2025, the "Fire-Up Five" of Tom Ellspermann, Steve Bunn, John Roscoe, Joe Ofsansky and Greg Lozeau, who helped SMC capture three straight national cross country championships from 1973-75, ambled along near the back of the pack – for them a new vantage point and pace.

Steve's sister, Carrie, will continue to facilitate Fire Up signs to memorialize runners' loved ones.

"We invited area cross country teams to come out," Schrock said. "The city provides us resources, such as the fire and police departments, for which we're very grateful."

Known as Steve's Run since 1992, the event has raised more than $300,000 since 2012 for cancer research and scholarships.

Steve's Run left downtown in 2015 for Southwestern Michigan College's campus, where it began in front of the David C. Briegel Building, named for SMC's fifth president from 1981-98.

David's and Camille's son, Steven Briegel, was born July 21, 1967, and died March 1, 1990, at age 22 after a 5 ½-year battle with cancer. He graduated fifth in Union High School's Class of 1986 and played basketball, golf and in band for the Chieftains.

See **RUN**, page B2

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OLSEN

From page B1

"He's surrounded by a lot of good kids, but he's a leader," said Niles Athletic Director Matt Brawley. "He's fun to be around. He's a once-in-a-lifetime talent. He's a kid that probably could have gone to the highest level in three sports, and that's unheard of, especially at his size. Being able to excel the way he does in baseball and everything in life, he was a blessing. I've been fortunate enough to know him since he was 6 years old, and he has always been a special talent."

Three-sport standout

Olsen's senior year began on the football field where he helped the Vikings earn a third consecutive district title and the program's first 9-0 season since 1979. Olsen was named all-conference and all-region for his play at defensive back and wide receiver. In basketball, Olsen's combination of size and athleticism helped him earn all-conference honors as the Vikings earned a district championship over rival Benton Harbor, the program's second in four years.

In baseball, Olsen batted .446 with 50 hits, 50 runs, seven home runs, 25 extra base hits and 25 stolen bases to lead the Vikings to a school-record 29 wins and a third consecutive district title. He was named to All-Conference, All-State and All-Region teams as well as the MHSBCA Dream Team for the second consecutive year.

Olsen was a key piece in Niles' athletics renaissance, helping Vikings teams earn a total of eight district titles, one regional title and a state runner-up trophy in three sports during his four years in high school.

"It's been great," Olsen said. "We've seen a lot, we've won a lot, but we've also learned a lot of lessons. Losing late in football, losing late in baseball, losing in basketball – it's all life, and you learn so much. These coaches aren't just here to teach you a sport; they're teaching you how to grow up and be a man. You're going to lose in life, and things are going to be hard. They're going to push you beyond your limits just to see if they can break you, and it's all about how you weather the storm and push through adversity."

While baseball is his favorite sport and the sport he will play at the next level, Olsen enjoyed being a three-sport athlete and believes it helped him get to where he is today.

"It helps you in every category," he said. "The things you do on the football field and the basketball court translate to baseball. You're moving so much and doing different movements you wouldn't even think of. I played defensive back for football, and it's the same opening-up movement as tracking a fly ball in the outfield. You're constantly taking those steps in football, so by the time you get to baseball season, everything transforms. Hand-eye coordination from football and basketball – catching the ball, shooting, dunking – you have to be coordinated to do those things. When it comes to baseball, everything is there and it's going to help you out."

Don Campbell / HP staff

Niles' Brenden Olsen shoots over over Benton Harbor's Zameir Clayton and Damonee McBride during a district championship earlier this year in Berrien Springs.

Viking pride

From the gridiron to the court and the diamond, representing Niles as an athlete has been one of Olsen's greatest honors.

"I've always been a Niles Viking; I was born and raised in Niles," Olsen said. "Being able to represent Niles for four years is way more than just high school; it's been my life since I was 6 years old. It's a nostalgic feeling. Especially this last year with everything on the football field, basketball court and baseball field finally coming to an end. It's a chapter closing, but I'm ready for new beginnings and ready to take off."

Brawley, a class of 2000 Niles graduate, was a three-sport athlete himself and is well-versed in Niles' sports history. As far as Brawley is concerned, Olsen is one of the best athletes to walk the halls at Niles.

"There have been some very, very good athletes, and his name is right up there with your David Gardners, Al Brenners and Tim Gourlays," Brawley said. "I didn't throw my brother Chris in that – I have him as number one, but I'm biased because I'm here and those guys were before me. But Brenden is the best I've ever seen. He's just an awesome kid. Wherever he ends up, someone's going to be very blessed with him."

"Growing up, I always wanted to be the best," Olsen added. "I'm a perfectionist, so everything I do, I try to be my best at it, whether as a person or an athlete. You'll stumble all the time – nobody's perfect – but it's been a blessing to be influenced by guys older than me and to be able to talk to people like that. David Gardner has a son who is my little brother's age, and I'm around them all the time. His son looks up to me. He actually texted me earlier saying, 'Hey man, let's go hit sometime.' I love that I can be a guy who helps carry these kids to be not just better athletes, but better people. It's a great feeling to be that guy."

Olsen, who previously signed on to play baseball for the University of Houston, has reopened his recruitment while considering pursuing Major League Baseball. Wherever he ends up, Olsen looks forward to representing Niles with pride and encourages the next generation to try their best.

"Show up and work hard. It's a grind – not just athletics, but life. Life's a grind. Whether you're in the classroom, on the field, or on the court, life is going to throw curveballs at you. It's all about how you battle adversity. There are going to be ups and downs, so know who you are and carry that. Don't let anybody change who you are. Stay true to what you know and stay true to yourself.

"If you think you're that guy, be confident and let everything else do the talking."

Verlander to retire after this season

By LARRY LAGE
Associated Press

DETROIT — Justin Verlander plans to call it a career later this year.

The three-time Cy Young Award winner, two-time World Series champion and 2011 AL MVP will retire after this season with the Detroit Tigers.

Verlander made the announcement on Wednesday, shortly after he was added as a Legend Pick to the American League All-Star roster.

"While I'm fully committed to giving my team everything I have for the rest of this season, I've decided this will be my last," Verlander shared on social media. "It's fitting that I get to finish where it all started – with the Detroit Tigers, the organization that drafted me and gave me my first opportunity."

Oldest player in the majors at 43

The 43-year-old Verlander is the oldest player in Major League Baseball. He signed a $13 million, one-year contract to rejoin the Tigers in February.

Verlander allowed five runs in 3 ⅔ innings during a 9-6 road loss at Arizona on March 30.

That was his only start this year.

"It's time for the next chapter," Verlander said. "But first, I'm excited to finish this season the only way I know how – with everything I've got."

Verlander has dealt with injuries

Verlander went on the injured list with hip inflammation early in the season and when the right-hander was nearing a return last month, he pulled a hamstring during a bullpen session.

"It just felt like I was plugging holes in a boat," Verlander said at Wednesday's news conference. "When you kind of put everything together and consider everything, I've been kind of trending toward this decision for quite a while."

He was scheduled to pitch in June and make what would have been his first start with the Tigers at Comerica Park since August 30, 2017 – the day before he was traded to the Astros.

He still intends to make that start, and is scheduled to throw a bullpen before Thursday's game against the Athletics.

"I do want to focus on playing the rest of the season," he said. "I think there will be a time to really sit here and reminisce and focus more on the actual retirement. Right now, my focus is still to get out there and be the best version of myself I can be for this team. We are playing great baseball right now, and things are going well, and we're trending in the right direction.

"I'm champing at the bit to be part of it."

Cy Young winner and World Series champion

Verlander went 183-115 from 2005 to 2017 with the Tigers. He won the American League Rookie of the Year award in 2006 and both the AL MVP and Cy Young Award in 2011. He helped Detroit reach the World Series in 2006 and 2012 along with four straight division titles from 2011 to 2014.

Verlander was the 2017 ALCS MVP in Houston and helped the Astros win the World Series that year and was a key player for them when they won another title in 2022. He won his second and third Cy Young Award in 2019 and 2022.

"I've been fortunate to play with and against incredible players, for outstanding organizations, and compete in front of fans who deeply appreciate the game," Verlander said.

RUN

From page B1

He graduated with an associate degree in mathematics with honors from SMC in 1988 and was a junior in the Ferris State University program at SMC at the time of his death.

He was a member of Phi Theta Kappa honor society.

After Steve's death, SMC's annual Road and Trail Race became Steve's Run, dedicated to all who have fought or are still fighting cancer, with proceeds split between Mayo Clinic cancer research and the Briegel scholarship. President Briegel died Jan. 13, 2021.

"I wanted to do something to honor Steve," founder Ron Gunn said. "We had a run around Edwardsburg's Eagle Lake in his honor" on July 31, 1991. On Aug. 1, 1992, Steve's Run embraced Dowagiac.

As SMC dean of sports education, Gunn organized races throughout the 1970s-'80s through Roadrunner Track Club. "The first few years it was called the Road and Trail Race, the Bud Lite Run and the Nike-Fair Store Run," he said.

A magazine named Steve's Run one of the 10 best vacation runs in the country for its unique combination of highways, the Elks golf course and the college's rugged trails with hay bales and log obstacles.

Monday Night Running Club, founded in 1979, activated countless sedentary community members.

After a virtual event in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, the race moved back into town in 2021.

Sign up for Steve's Run today at runsignup.com/stevesrun.

The 52nd annual Steve's Run will take place at 6 p.m. Friday, July 17 in downtown Dowagiac.

Photo provided

BASEBALL

From page B1

The WPBL's debut season begins on Aug. 1 in Springfield, Illinois – games will be played at Robin Roberts Stadium – and will run through the second half of September, including a regular season and playoffs.

"This is just every little girl's dream to play professional baseball," Whitmore told The Associated Press at a scrimmage in March, "and now for us to actually be with each other – there's so much freedom and peace within it."

Now, the league that has been years in the making is set, hoping to create a space for women's baseball players similar to the one the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League did 70 years ago.

That starts with the team identities and names, each of which holds a unique meaning.

■ The New York Heights were inspired by Dorothy Irene Height, a pioneering civil rights and women's rights leader from New York. Their logo includes graphic lines surrounding a baseball, mimicking the speed of a fastball and resembling the New York skyline.

■ The San Francisco Firebells were inspired by Lillie Hitchcock Coit, known as "Firebelle," who was a champion of San Francisco's volunteer firefighters. Their logo fuses a bell with a phoenix.

■ The Los Angeles Queens were created after Lizzie Murphy, as baseball pioneer known as the "Queen of the Diamond." The logo is a capital Q topped with four baseball diamonds.

■ The Boston Hunters are inspired by Harriot K. Hunt, a pioneering Boston physician and women's rights activist. Their logo is an osprey, clasping a baseball bat in its talons.

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SILVER CREEK TOWNSHIP
June 10, 2026 Meeting Summary
Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm and the pledge of allegiance was recited.
Board Members- All Present- Braman, Honn, Behnke, Barnes, Stockwell.
Agenda, Minutes, and Bills and Claims in the amount of $153,720.99 were approved.
The following motions were approved and carried:
Dowagiac Connected 4th of July celebration in the amount of $7,500
Ordinance 26-01: Temporary Moratorium on Data Centers
MTA membership renewal in the amount of $6,368
BS&A Cloud Assessing Data Reconversion
Magician Lake Improvement Association fireworks application
Indian Lake Improvement Association fireworks application
SLAUA Agreement extension of contract for ILS
Public Comment was offered and comments heard.
Meeting adjourned at 9:25pm.
Detailed minutes are available on the website.

PUBLIC NOTICE OF HERBICIDE APPLICATION
The Daltons Inc., its main office at 8857 N. Syracuse-Webster Rd., Syracuse, IN 46567, has been contracted by _ Cass Co Road Commission to perform custom chemical vegetation control maintenance services at designated roadside locations throughout the county.
In doing so, they will be broadcast applying the following EPA-registered materials: Alligare Triclopyr 3SL (Triclopyr) or Corteva Garlon 3A or Corteva Element 3A and Envu/Bayer Escort XP or Alligare MSM 60(Metsulfuron Methyl).
Do not enter or allow entry into treated areas until sprays have dried. This application will be completed by certified applicators employed by The Daltons Inc., during the months of August and/or September. Additional information may be requested by contacting David Mohler or Brad Bolinger at 574-267-7511.
WE APPLY EXCELLENCE
Billing info: P.O. Box 724, North Webster, IN. 46555 or we will pay by credit card. Please forward an estimate via email/phone for approval. The public notice ad to appear just once, as soon as possible. No affidavit is needed. Please also include a copy of the tear sheet with your invoice. Thank you

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on August 12, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Robert E. Hunt and Marilyn J. Hunt, husband and wife
Original Mortgagee: Credit Union Mortgage Company
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Member First Mortgage, LLC
Date of Mortgage: October 22, 2004
Date of Mortgage Recording: October 26, 2004
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $33,715.25
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Village of Cassopolis, Cass County, Michigan, and described as: Lot number 1, Block 3 South, Range 4 East of the Altered Plat of the Village of Cassopolis, as recorded in Liber 41 of Deeds Page 622.
Common street address (if any): 303 S Fulton St, Cassopolis, MI 49031-1208
The redemption period shall be 1 year from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: July 11, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515 1598027(07-11)(08-01)

THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT

Default having been made in the conditions of a certain Mortgage made by MALINDA L. SPEICHER, a single woman, residing at 368 East Main Street, Marcellus, MI 49067 to OAK MORTGAGE, LLC. (n/k/a STURGIS BANK & TRUST COMPANY), 125 E. Chicago Road, Sturgis, Michigan 49091 dated August 6, 2021, and recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds for the County of Cass and State of Michigan, on August 18, 2021, in Liber 1201 of Mortgages, on page 1648. There is claimed to be due on the date of this notice, for principal and interest the sum of One Hundred Sixteen Thousand Sixty-Seven and 23/100 ($116,267.23) Dollars due on the mortgage and no proceedings having been instituted to recover the debt now remaining secured by said Mortgage, or any part thereof, whereby the power of sale contained in said Mortgage has become operative;

Now Therefore, Notice is Given that by virtue of the power of sale contained in said Mortgages and under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, the said Mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises therein described or so much thereof as may be necessary, at a public auction sale, to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check, at the West outer door of the Courthouse in the City of Cassopolis and County of Cass, Michigan, that being the place of holding Circuit Court in and for said County, on July 15, 2026, at promptly 10:00 o'clock in the forenoon of said day; which said mortgage premises are described as follows, to-wit: Lot 3, Block 1 South, Range 3 East, Village of Marcellus, according to the recorded plat in Liber 41 of Plats, Page 138, Cass County Records.

Property Address: 368 East Main Street, Marcellus, MI 49067 PIN: 14-051-551-003-00

Said premises will be sold to pay the amount as aforesaid then due on said Mortgage together with 2.875% percent interest on the Mortgage, legal costs, attorneys' fees and also any taxes and insurance that said Mortgagee does pay on or prior to the date of said sale. The amount due on said Mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.

Pursuant to MCL 600.3240, the last day to redeem the Sheriff's Deed will be January 15, 2027, however, if an Affidavit of Abandonment is filed with the Register of Deeds, the last day to redeem will be August 15, 2026, or until the time to provide the notice was required by MCL 600.3241a(c) expires, whichever is later.

If said property is in fact sold at the above-described foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the above listed Mortgagor will be responsible to the person who buys the property at the foreclosure sale or to STURGIS BANK & TRUST COMPANY for damaging the property during the redemption period.

ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this Notice.

ATTENTION PURCHASERS: This sale may be rescinded by the foreclosing mortgagee. In that event, your damages, if any, shall be limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest.

Dated: June 20, 2026 STURGIS BANK & TRUST
Mortgagee.
HaasCaywood PC
By: P. Joseph Haas, Jr.
Attorney for STURGIS BANK & TRUST
Business Address: 112 South Monroe Street
Sturgis, MI 49091
(269) 651-3281

Notice of Sewage Overflow in Sister Lakes Area (Magician Lake)
The City of Dowagiac is notifying residents of a sewage overflow near 30185 Magician Terrace Drive, Sister Lakes occurred between 8:00 PM on July 4, 2026, and 9:00 PM on July 4, 2026.
What happened: A control system that operates the lift station pumps failed due to a power fault. As a result, raw sewage overflowed onto the grassy area around the lift station. An estimated 300 gallons overflowed in total.
What we did: When staff discovered the problem, they immediately pumped the lift station down, which stopped the overflow. Sewage was cleaned from the area and Hydrated lime, which neutralizes bacteria, was spread on the ground in the affected area.
What's next: City coordinated with AEP in regard to power restoration. Sister Lakes Utility Authority is in the process of installing backup emergency generator systems at all critical lift station sites, we anticipate this work to be completed in the coming months.
Residents and water customers with questions can contact the Dowagiac Department of Public Works at 269.782.8200.

NOTICE OF ELECTION
AUGUST 4TH, 2026 STATE PRIMARY
SILVER CREEK TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

To the qualified electors of Silver Creek Township:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE STATE PRIMARY ELECTION will be held in Silver Creek Township on Tuesday, August 4th, 2026. The polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. At the following location: 32764 Dixon Street (Township Hall).

Candidates on the Primary Ballot include: STATE: Governor of Michigan; CONGRESSIONAL: US Senator; Representative in 5th District; LEGISLATIVE: State Senator 17th District; Representative for 37th District; TOWNSHIP: Supervisor (partial term); DELEGATE: Delegate to County Convention.

Proposals on the Ballot include: COUNTY: 911 Central Dispatch Renewal Millage Proposal.

Full text of the ballot proposal may be obtained at the Township Hall or online. Sample ballots can also be found at www.mi.gov/vote.

Absentee ballots are available for all elections; registered voters may contact the local clerk to obtain an application for an absent voter ballot.

To comply with the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), voting instructions will be available in audio format and in Braille. Arrangements for obtaining the instructions in these alternatives' formats can be made by contacting the township clerk in advance of the election. All polling locations are accessible for voters with disabilities.

Jessica Honn
Silver Creek Township Clerk
PH: 269-424-3025 (ext. 4)
Email: clerk@silvercreektwpmi.gov

SHORT FORECLOSURE NOTICE - CASS COUNTY Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on August 12, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE: Mortgagor(s): Steven J. Gaborik and Ebony R. Gaborik, husband and wife, and John W. Gaborik, a married man, as joint tenants with rights if survivorship Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. ("MERS"), solely as nominee for lender and lender`s successors and assigns Date of mortgage: October 7, 2022 Recorded on October 12, 2022, Liber 1224, on Page 1127, Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC Amount claimed to be due at the date hereof: One Hundred Eighty-Seven Thousand Five Hundred Eighty-Eight and 65/100 Dollars ($187,588.65) Mortgaged premises: Situated in Cass County, and described as: Commencing 440 feet East of the Northwest corner of the Northwest 1/4 of Section 21, T5S, R13W, Marcellus Township, Cass County, Michigan; thence East 160 feet; thence South 248 feet; thence West 160 feet; thence North 248 feet to the point of beginning. Commonly known as 13845 Marcellus Highway, Marcellus, MI 49067 The redemption period will be 6 month from the date of such sale, unless abandoned under MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of such sale, or 15 days from the MCL 600.3241a(b) notice, whichever is later; or unless extinguished pursuant to MCL 600.3238. If the above referenced property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of Act 236 of 1961, under MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC Mortgagee/Assignee Schneiderman & Sherman P.C. 23938 Research Dr, Suite 300 Farmington Hills, MI 48335 248.539.7400
1598271 (07-11)(08-01)

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE SALE

THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION WE OBTAIN WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE AT THE NUMBER BELOW IF YOU ARE IN THE ACTIVE MILITARY DUTY.

ATTENTION PURCHASERS: This sale may be rescinded by the foreclosing mortgagee. In that event, your damages, if any, shall be limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest.

Default having been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made the 31st day of May 2018, made by Terry A. Eldridge as mortgagor, to the G. W. Jones Exchange Bank, a corporation of Marcellus, Michigan, as mortgagee, and recorded June 1, 2018, in the Office of the Register of Deeds for the County of Cass and State of Michigan, in Liber 1140 of records, page 1198 and the Mortgagee having elected under the terms of said Mortgage to declare the entire principal and accrued interest thereon due, which election it does hereby exercise, pursuant to which mortgagee claims due and unpaid at the date of this notice Twenty-Nine Thousand Five Hundred Thirty-Three & 42/100($29,533.42), principal and interest to date.

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, in such case made and provided, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on August 19, 2026, at 10:00 o'clock in the forenoon, at the Courthouse, 60296 M-62, Cassopolis, Michigan, (that being the place for holding the Circuit Court for the County of Cass), there will be offered for sale to the highest bidder at Public Auction for the purpose of satisfying the amount due and unpaid on said mortgage with interest thereon of 7.75% per cent per annum, and all legal costs, charges and expenses, including attorney fees as allowed by law and also any sums paid by the undersigned to protect its interest prior to said sale, which said premises are situated in the Village of Marcellus, County of Cass, described as:

Lot 81, in the Addition to the Original Plat of the Village of Edwardsburg, according to the recorded plat thereof. SUBJECT TO easements and building and use restrictions of record. Tax ID#14-091-100-072-00

The length of the period of redemption from such sale will be six (6) months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA 600.3241(a) in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale or until the time to provide the notice required by MCL 600.3241a(c) expires, whichever is later. The redemption period may also be extinguished as provided in MCL 600.3328.

Please be advised that if the property is sold at foreclosure sale pursuant to the procedures provided in MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Please be further advised that the redemption period may also be extinguished under the circumstances described in MCL 600.3238.

Dated: July 6, 2026 G.W. JONES EXCHANGE BANK
Marcellus, Michigan.
Prepared by:
JONES LAW OFFICE
Cordell R. Jones (P15567)
Counsel for Mortgagee
120 West Main Street, Marcellus, Michigan 49067 ,Ph: 269-646-5511

Notice of Sewage Overflow in Indian Lakes
The City of Dowagiac is notifying residents of a sewage overflow near 31244 Inn-D-Inn Drive Drive, (Indian Lake Area) occurred between 8:00 PM on July 3, 2026, and 9:00 PM on July 3, 2026.
What happened: A control system that operates the lift station pumps failed due to a power fault. As a result, raw sewage overflowed onto the grassy area around the lift station. An estimated 200 gallons overflowed in total.
What we did: When staff discovered the problem, they immediately pumped the lift station down, which stopped the overflow. Sewage was cleaned from the area and Hydrated lime, which neutralizes bacteria, was spread on the ground in the affected area.
What's next: City coordinated with AEP in regard to power restoration. We will continue to monitor lift station alarms.
Residents and water customers with questions can contact the Dowagiac Department of Public Works at 269.782.8200.

NOTICE OF ZONING COMMISSION HEARING
WAYNE TOWNSHIP CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN

TO THE RESIDENTS OF AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WAYNE, CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN AND ALL OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Wayne Township Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on July 23, 2026 at 7:00 P.M. in the Wayne Township Hall located at 53950 Glenwood Road to consider issuing a Zoning Variance for Tim Thompson regarding parcel #14-150-235-010-00, located at 52855 Lake Shore Dr., Dowagiac, MI 49047. This is for the building of a garage addition that requires setback adjustments.
PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that written comments concerning the above matters may be mailed to the Wayne Township Clerk, Attention Zoning Commission, 53950 Glenwood Rd., Dowagiac, MI 49047, at any time prior to this public hearing and may further be submitted to the Zoning Commission at said public hearing.

All interested persons are invited to be present at the previously mentioned time and place to be heard with respect to this matter.

This notice is served and posted in compliance with Public Act 267 of 1976, as amended; the Open Meetings Act; MCLA 41.72a (2)(3); Americans with Disabilities Act and The Wayne Township Zoning Ordinance.

Wayne Township will provide necessary, reasonable auxiliary aids and services at the meeting/hearing to individuals with disabilities, upon reasonable notice to the Township Clerk. Individuals with disabilities requiring aids or services should contact the Township in writing at: Michelle Smith, Wayne Township Clerk, 53950 Glenwood Rd., Dowagiac, MI 49047, by phone at 269-782-7017 or by email at: clerksmith.waynetwp@gmail.com

Michelle Smith, Clerk, Wayne Township

LAGRANGE TOWNSHIP
Cass COUNTY, MICHIGAN

NOTICE OF ADOPTION/SUMMARY OF ORDINANCE

TO: THE RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF LAGRANGE TOWNSHIP, ST. JOSEPH COUNTY, MICHIGAN, AND ANY OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the following is a summary of ordinance numbered 2026-1 imposing a temporary moratorium on the consideration of applications for data centers in the Township which was adopted by the LaGrange Township Board at its regular meeting on June 15, 2026.

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-1

SECTION 1. FINDINGS. The Township Board wishes to undertake further study to consider the impacts of data centers; and to permit the planning commission to undertake consideration of such use as it relates to zoning and land use in the Township.

SECTION 2. MORATORIUM/TERM OF MORATORIUM. A 12-month moratorium is enacted to temporarily eliminate acceptance or processing of applications for data centers in the Township.

SECTION 3. EXTENSION OF MORATORIUM. The Township can extend the moratorium by resolution before it expires in order to provide sufficient time consideration of such use in the Township and potential ordinance amendments therefore.

SECTION 4. SEVERABILITY. The various provisions of the Ordinance are severable from each other.

SECTION 5. REPEAL. Conflicting ordinances and ordinance provisions are repealed.

SECTION 6. EFFECTIVE DATE. The Ordinance is effective upon publication of this summary.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the full text of the Ordinance has been posted at the LaGrange Township Hall, 58253 M 62, Cassopolis, MI 49031; on the township's website at www.LaGrangeTownshipMI.com; and that copies of the Ordinance may be obtained or inspected at the office of the LaGrange Township Clerk at the address set forth below during regular business hours of regular working days following the date of this publication. The Township may be contacted at (269) 233-4004.

LaGrange Township
Tasha McCoy, Clerk
Clerk@LaGrangeTownshipMI.com
www.lagrangetownshipmi.com
269-233-4004
58253 M 62
Cassopolis, MI 49031

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in CASS County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on July 22, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE INFORMATION: Default has been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made by Jamal B. Smith, whose address is 33602 Sassafras Lane, Eau Claire, Michigan 49111, as original Mortgagors, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC, being a mortgage dated October 20, 2023, and recorded on November 2, 2023 in Liber 1239 Page 389, Cass County Records, State of Michigan and then assigned to SAIF Securitization Trust 2024-CES1, as assignee as documented by an assignment dated June 1, 2026 and recorded on June 8, 2026 in Liber 1277 Page 1443, Cass County Records, Michigan, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of FORTY THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED SIXTY-ONE AND 69/100 DOLLARS ($40,461.69). Said premises are situated in the Township of Silver Creek, County of Cass, State of Michigan, and are described as: Unit 19 in Indian Lake Woods Condominium, according to the Master Deed thereof, as recorded in Liber 847, Page 137, Cass County Records, and any amendments thereto and designated as Cass County Condominium Subdivision Plan No. 12, together with rights in general common elements and limited common elements as set forth in said Master Deed and as described in Act 59 of the Public Acts of 1978, as amended. Street Address: 33602 Sassafras Lane, Eau Claire, Michigan 49111 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless the property is determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA § 600.3241a in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of the sale. If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCLA § 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WE OBTAIN WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: IF YOU ARE A MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER ON ACTIVE DUTY, IF YOUR PERIOD OF ACTIVE DUTY HAS CONCLUDED LESS THAN 90 DAYS AGO, OR IF YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY, PLEASE CONTACT THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PARTY FORECLOSING THE MORTGAGE AT THE TELEPHONE NUMBER STATED IN THIS NOTICE. Dated: June 20, 2026 For more information, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing: Robert A. Blumberg (P87490) Johnson, Blumberg & Associates LLC 30 North LaSalle St., Suite 3650 Chicago, Illinois, 60602 312.541.9710 - Phone 312.541.9711 - Fax File No.: MI 26 7212 (06-20)(07-11)

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0900 LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

RE: ESTATE OF PHYLLIS L. ROGERS, DECEASED BERRIEN COUNTY, MI PROBATE FILE # 2026-0460-DE-J HON. PAUL S. JANCHA

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The Decedent, Phyllis L. Rogers, died April 3, 2026, a resident of the City of Niles, Berrien County, Michigan. She resided at 1351 Cass Street, Niles, MI 49120. Creditors of PHYLLIS L. ROGERS, Deceased and the above estate are notified that all claims against PHYLLIS L. ROGERS, individually and the above Estate will be forever barred unless presented to the Berrien County Probate Court, 811 Port Street, St. Joseph, MI 49085 and Timothy J. Rogers, Personal Representative and to Attorney James J. Mollison, whose respective addresses are listed below, within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date: 07/11/2026

Timothy J. Rogers
Personal Representative
1351 Cass Street
Niles, MI 49120
C 832-466-1009

James J. Mollison [P17884]
Attorney for the Estate
4 South Lincoln Avenue
Niles, MI 49120
269-684-7600
C 269-930-4170

0900 LEGALS

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
Cass COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

CASE NO. and JUDGE
2026-093-DE
Hon. Carol M. Bealor

Court address:
60296 M-62,
Cassopolis, MI 49031
Court phone no.
269-445-4454

Estate of: Gary Lee Wise, deceased
Date of birth: 08/18/1955

TO ALL CREDITORS: **

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The decedent, Gary Lee Wise died 10/12/2025. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Charles Wise personal representative, or to both the probate court at 60296 M-62, Cassopolis, MI 49031 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date: 07/01/2026

Charles Wise
Personal Representative
3105 Private Road 5521
Willow Springs, MO 65793
(417)252-0601

NOTICE OF PUBLIC ACCURACY TEST SILVER CREEK TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN
Notice of Public Accuracy Test of Voting Equipment
Important Message from the Silver Creek Clerk's Office:
To the qualified electors of the Silver Creek Township, Cass County, State of Michigan will be conducting a Public Accuracy Test for the electronic equipment that will be used to tabulate the votes in Precincts 1. The Public Accuracy Test is conducted to demonstrate the computer programming used to tabulate the votes cast at the election meets the requirements of Michigan Election Law.
The meeting is being held on **Tuesday, July 14th at 10:00a.**
All members of the public are invited to participate.
For special accommodations, please call the Clerk's office at 269-424-3025 x4 to make arrangements.

Jessica Honn
Silver Creek Township Clerk
269-424-3025 (ext. 4)
clerk@silvercreektwpmi.gov

Township of Howard Cass County, Michigan PUBLIC NOTICE Dominion Voting Machine Public Accuracy Testing for Precincts 1and 2 August 4, 2026, Primary Election will be held Wednesday, July 22, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at the Township Business Office 1345 Barron Lake Road

Public Invited

0900 LEGALS

Economy Storage, 2206 Yankee Street, Niles, MI 49120. Auction Saturday July 25. 2026 at 10:00 a.m.
Unit # Name
4 Ronald Phillips
27 Nicolas Sansom
28 Emalee Anderson
37 Kayla Johnson
59 Eian Nace
62 Andrew Dunifin
67 Jerome Jankowiak
82 Ericka Pitone
85 Shelden Walden
111 Izayah Roeder
125/179 Steve Kelley
127/633 Chris Norris
145/467/468 Michael Merritt
148 Gloster Johnson
164 Bradley Hattenback
183 Cindy Fisher
184/66 Mary Anderson
185 Candy Whitmire
190/306 Linda Nilson
191 Alan Smith
192 Patricia Yoder
240 Teyshawn Wallace
258 Brianna Coon
259 Rose Mitchell
268 Dan Hoft
270 Vincent Bosch
272 Kurt Shepard
273 Tony Pompey
278 Chelsie Carlyle
284 Kathleen Peterson
331 Valerie Outlaw
334 Sheila Kollars
342 Terrence Moss
346 DaMonica Williams
356 Chase Molica
379 Bobbie Helms
383 Karen Turner
409 Brenda Lary
410/534 Rebecca Coleman
427 McCade Reese
442 Dawn Hojara
451 Jean Fitch
452 Tyler Mahar
490 Jackie Pugh
526 Keith Hill
541 Nicole Hurt
545 Candy Whitmire
608 Robert Conner
619 Timothy Wiese
638 Britney Stanczyk
639 Barry Brann

Niles U-Stor-It, 1314 E. Main Street, Niles, MI 49120. Auction Saturday July 25, 2026, at 10:30 a.m.

1 Anne Billingsley
25 John Harrington
28 Lawson Fink
52 Alana Abrams

J & J Storage, 2220 S. 13th Street and 2627 S. 11th Street, Niles, MI 49120. Auction Saturday July 25, 2026, at 11:00 a.m.

31/28 Christine Runner
57 James Colburn
64 Wendy Jones
127A Tim Chavis
167A Kiyan Kinsey
107 Bobby Marrow
125 Kristina Hemminger
165 Sharon Helms
175 Sheri Rutledge-Blocher
227 Jennifer Nichols
263 Tamara Holmes
264 Rogert Hobson
292 The Woodshed Crafts
319 Jeannie Barsodi
373 Rhonda Sue Outlaw
399 Lisa Hayslip
452 Aaron Smith
481 Natosha Libertowski

0900 LEGALS

PUBLIC NOTICE
The Penn Township Board of Review will meet on: Tuesday, July 21, 2026, at 5pm at the Township Hall 60717 Main St, Vandalia, Michigan. The purpose of this meeting is to correct qualified errors. NO VALUATION APPEALS CAN BE HEARD.
The July and December Boards of Review have different authorities than the March Board of Review. The July and December Boards of Review meet to correct Qualified Errors, and to consider appeals related to the Principal Residence Exemption, Qualified Agricultural Exemption, Taxable Value Uncapping, the Qualified Start-up Business Exemption, and Poverty Exemptions.

Contact Information:
Don Jollay, MAAO
Phone: **(815)546-8288**
Email:
PennAssessor@gmail.com
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 69
Vandalia, MI 49095

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County of Cass
Notice of Public Accuracy Test of Voting Equipment
Important Message from the Cass County Clerk's Office:

To the qualified electors of the County of Cass, State of Michigan, the Cass County Election Commission will hold a meeting to conduct the Public Accuracy Test for the electronic equipment that will be used to tabulate all Early Voting Precincts for the August 4, 2026, Primary Election. The Public Accuracy Test is conducted to demonstrate the computer programming used to tabulate the votes cast at the election meets the requirements of Michigan Election Law.

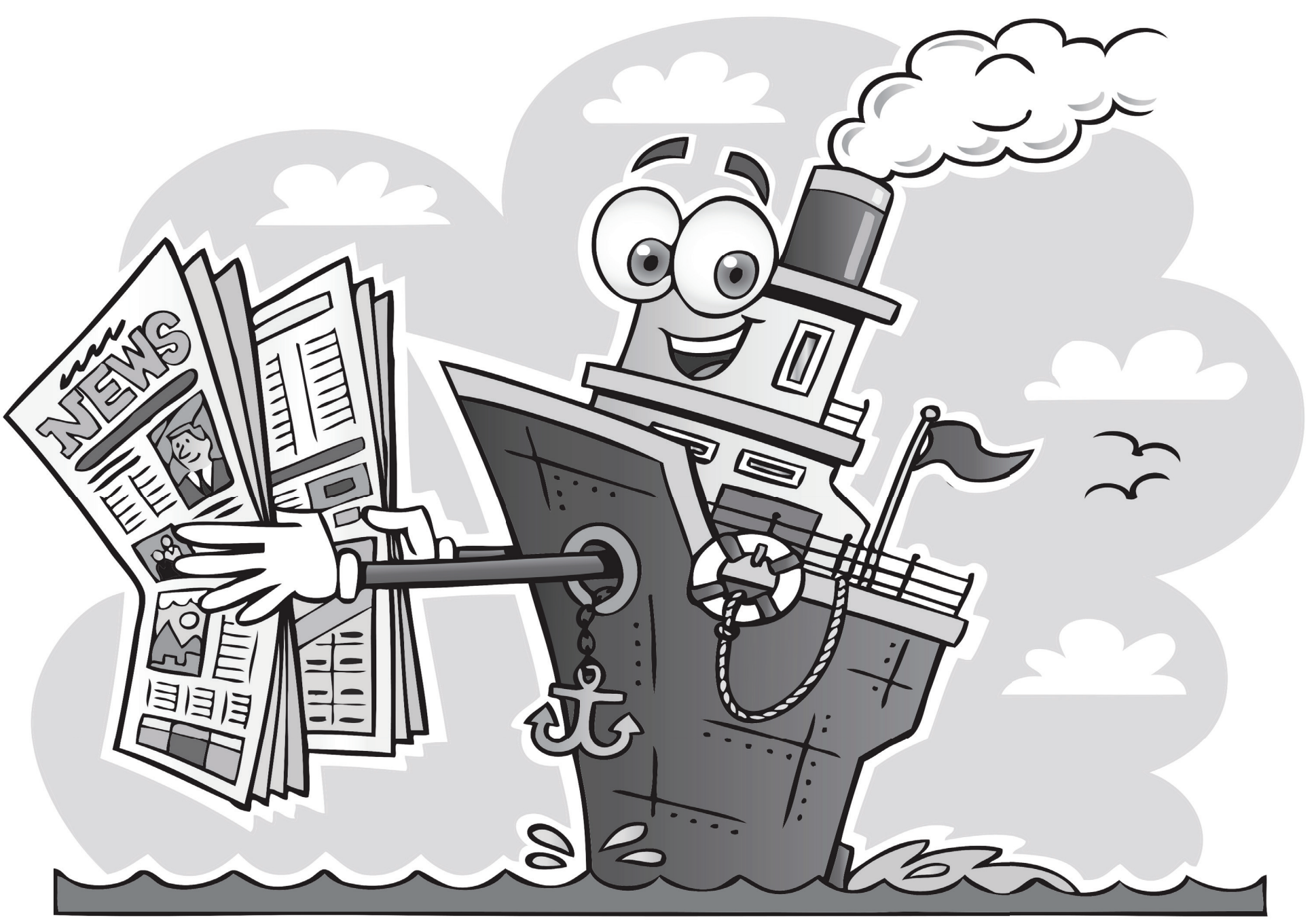
All members of the public are invited to participate.
The test will take place at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, in Commissioner Chambers, 120 N. Broadway, Cassopolis MI 49031.

For special accommodations, please call the clerk's office at (269) 445-4464 or via email at clerk@cassco.org to make arrangements.

Monica McMichael
Cass County Clerk/Register
(269)445-4464

Notice of Sewage Overflow at Dowagiac Wastewater Treatment Plant
The City of Dowagiac is notifying residents of a sewage overflow at the Dowagiac Wastewater Treatment Plant that occurred between 9:00 PM on June 30, 2026, and 12:30 AM on July 1, 2026.
What happened: A control system that operates the plant's pumps failed due to a power fault. As a result, partially treated wastewater-water that had already passed through a screening process to remove solids-overflowed onto the grassy area around one of the plant's tanks. An estimated 145,000 gallons overflowed in total. Approximately 30-50% of that total may have reached Dowagiac Creek.
What we did: When staff discovered the problem, they immediately closed a gate that stopped the overflow. Hydrated lime, which neutralizes bacteria, was spread on the ground in the affected area. Water samples have been collected from both upstream and downstream of the plant and are currently being tested.
What's next: Electrician and instrumentation contractors were on-site on July 1st to address the equipment failure and install a redundant float system that will permit the pumps to run mechanically in case of any future issue with digital controls. Additionally, an upgraded notification system to alert staff if a future high-water event happens is also being completed.
Residents and water customers with questions can contact the Dowagiac Department of Public Works at 269.782.8200.

RESERVE THIS SPACE TODAY!



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OUTDOORS

Submitting hunting or fishing photos

Have a behemoth buck, a tremendous turkey or super-sized salmon? Please submit photos to sports@TheHP.com.

Your photo must be in focus, all persons in the photo must be identified, and the general location of the hunt must be provided (for example, 10-point buck shot in Benton Township, black bear shot near Munising, Mich., etc.)

Firestorm at Silver Beach

Photos by Ryan Yuenger / HP correspondent

Despite multiple storms, Silver Beach stayed busy this holiday weekend.

Beachgoers enjoy the weather on Friday at Silver Beach in St. Joseph.

Boats sit in the water awaiting the fireworks at Silver Beach County Park.

People watch the fireworks display at Silver Beach just moments before heavy rain sent people scattering for shelter.

Ryan Yuenger

In an apparent homage to its amusement park days, Silver Beach was a roller coaster of weather extremes this Fourth of July weekend.

Not once but twice, Mother Nature sent beachgoers fleeing for shelter on Friday ahead of – and during – the annual holiday fireworks display.

The first storm rolled in at about 3:30 p.m. Friday when a large, ominous shelf cloud appeared over Lake Michigan. Before most people could pack up and leave, 70 mph wind gusts hit the shore, sending umbrellas and canopies flying and people scrambling to safety.

The storm quickly tore through the region, causing widespread power outages and tree damage in Berrien County.

Firestorm

I made my way down to the beach with my camera around 7 p.m. The beach was again packed with people primed for a patriotic display of pyrotechnics.

After snapping some photos of the beach fun, I noticed a guy walking toward me wearing a Grateful Dead jersey I liked, so I struck up a conversation. My new chum and I walked along the beach sidewalk trail, chatting about music festivals, Grateful Dead and Southwest Michigan's live music scene as the sun disappeared behind another set of curious clouds.

Then, the fireworks began, much to everyone everyone's delight.

As the display progressed, I could sense a building energy. A large group of teens on the beach playing some kind of game got louder and louder as the fireworks boomed over the pier. Their loudness attracted even more teens to the area as the gray, cloudy backdrop to the fireworks darkened.

For a moment, I couldn't tell if there was lightning in those clouds, or if it was just the reflection of the fireworks. Was that a rumble of thunder, or an echoing boom from the pier?

Just like that, the sky opened up. Heavy, soaking rain had beachgoers running and yelling in chaos for the second time that day.

Several people shuffling down the sidewalk away from the fireworks looked back in awe, trying to cherish the moment while accepting their wet fate.

With my camera safely in its case, my new friend and I found shelter under a tree to watch the grand finale, which included lightning in every direction, shaking thunder and a delightful visual onslaught of fireworks reflecting off the wet surfaces.

Describing it as a sensory overload would be putting it mildly. It was the kind of scene that made me laugh out loud, drenched from head to toe, because I knew this column was going to write itself.

Sometimes, all it takes is me going outside with my camera and the story finds me.

In my eight years of living in St. Joseph, I've never actually attended the fireworks at Silver Beach until this year. I always used to hide from the tourists during summer. I stayed home, digging in my garden or hiking the backwoods trails, telling myself I don't like all the people and commotion.

In reality, I was just afraid to let myself be seen by all the people. I realized that my views of other people and the world around me was just a mirror into what I think about myself.

So, I decided to break out of my shell this year – letting myself be seen in public with no earbuds or music to hide behind. Ever since, I've been making connections and feeling more like a part of the community.

It seems obvious in hindsight, but it was a hard dune to climb.

Ryan Yuenger is an HP correspondent. Send him ideas of where to hike next at ryuenger@thehp.com.

Ukrainian climbers build a new outdoor culture inspired by Yosemite

By ILLIA NOVIKOV
Associated Press

DENYSHI, Ukraine — Atop a steep granite cliff overlooking a river about two hours' drive west of Ukraine's capital, hundreds of people pitched tents on a festival camping ground. By day, they climbed the rock face, swam in a reservoir or enjoyed stand-up paddling. As evening fell, live bands and DJs took over the stage as rock and electronic music drifted through the forest.

The Stoned Climbers festival, which took place last week in the Zhytomyr region, is Ukraine's biggest outdoors event combining climbing and live music. Like many public events in wartime Ukraine, the festival blended ordinary leisure with reminders that the war is never far away.

Visitors received multiple air raid alert notifications on their phones throughout the weekend. Soldiers on leave quietly blended into the crowd, while organizers directed all profits from this year's festival to a fundraising initiative supporting Ukraine's Azov Brigade. Unlike last year, however, no Russian drones or missiles crossed the sky above the campsite on their way toward Kyiv.

The volunteer-run festival was launched in 2023 by about 15 friends who had spent more than a year climbing together after becoming fascinated by Yosemite's climbing culture.

The U.S. national park has long been regarded as one of the birthplaces of modern rock climbing, where climbers built a counterculture around sleeping in tents, living out of vans and spending months on the granite walls of the valley.

"We realized climbing could be much more than just a sport," said festival co-founder Dmytro Isaienko, 39. "It's about a specific way of life – in nature, camping, on the rocks."

Isaienko and his friends wanted to challenge the perception that climbing was reserved for elite athletes. Their first festival attracted about 150 visitors. This summer, attendance grew to more than 500, most of them beginners or amateur climbers.

> **"We realized climbing could be much more than just a sport. It's about a specific way of life – in nature, camping, on the rocks."**
>
> **DMYTRO ISAIENKO**
> Stoned Climbers festival co-founder

Organizing the festival during wartime has given it a broader purpose, Isaienko said. He believes creating places where people can gather, learn new skills and spend time together has become a way of sustaining one's well-being through a prolonged war.

"You need to get away from the war for a while," he said. "Leave Kyiv and come spend some time here together, a little longer than usual."

Climbing community grows

On the rocks below, instructors help complete beginners fasten their harnesses, chalk their hands and search for the next hold on the granite wall. Whenever someone reaches the top of the 82-feet cliff – often for the first time – spectators, instructors and climbers break into applause.

Among the festival's newcomers was 21-year-old Liliia Karpach, who traveled from Ukraine's western Lviv region for her first Stoned Climbers festival.

"I decided to come because it had been a very long time since I'd climbed on real rocks," she said. "I also wanted to meet the community in person and get to know new people."

She said climbing is mental as well as physical exercise, and hopes others will give it a try.

Helping first-time climbers gain that confidence is one of the most rewarding parts of the festival for instructor Andrii Lamei, 24.

While belaying a young woman during her first climb, he calmly talked her through the most difficult part of the ascent. As she climbed higher, her movements became more confident. After reaching the top, Lamei encouraged her to pause before descending.

"Look around," he shouted. "Enjoy the moment. You made it."

"Climbing helps you work with stress," Lamei said. "It helps you manage stressful situations in everyday life."

He dreams of climbing outside Ukraine one day but, like most Ukrainian men, he cannot leave the country while wartime travel restrictions remain in place.

"I want to go across the border to visit Yosemite, to visit Norway's mountains, but I can't," he said. "But maybe this is how I'm forced to enjoy what I have here."

For Isaienko, that is precisely why festivals like Stoned Climbers matter.

While many Ukrainians have put parts of their lives on hold during the war, he hopes the community taking shape around the cliffs shows that new traditions can still emerge.

"This is a festival for everyone," he said. "Including people who have never tried climbing before."

And each time another first-time climber reaches the top, the applause rising from the rocks below suggests that, little by little, that community is growing.

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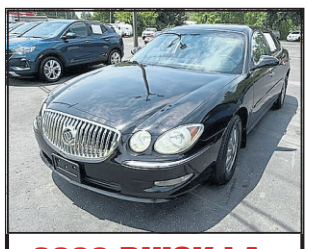
Loaded with all the options

Only $5,900



2009 BUICK LA-CROSSE CXL

3.8 V-6, only 117k miles

Only $9,500

2004 FREIGHTLINER THOMAS

Ready to work on a budget.

$10,000 or only $224/mo

2020 NISSAN VERSA SR

Only 88K miles on this sweet gas saver!

Only $11,700

2021 NISSAN KICKS S

Just in! Nice and fun crossover!

Only $14,500

2004 VOLKSWAGEN BEETLE GLS

Like new! Convertible, only 49k miles
Fun in the sun!

$14,900 or only $267/mo

2018 CHEVY IMPALA LT

Nice Impala and ready to go!

Only $15,500

2021 HYUNDAI SONATA

Only 49k miles on this gas saver!

$17,525 or only $370/mo

2023 CHRYSLER PACIFICA

Clean! One owner with leather seats and ready for the family!

$19,900 or only $375/mo

2024 NISSAN SENTRA

Just in!!
Like new for less!

$19,775 or only $365/mo

2015 CHEVY SILVERADO 1500 WT

Only 25k miles and ready to work!

Only $19,900

2022 JEEP COMPASS LATITUDE

AWD, like new with only 58k miles!

Only $20,900

2018 SUBARU FORESTER

Premium edition, AWD, loaded!

Only $20,900

2020 NISSAN PATHFINDER SL

4WD, Third Row Seating, Only 90k miles!

$21,900 or only $405/mo

2022 KEYSTONE CT3400

Like new but half the price

$22,200 or only $365/mo

2024 CHEVY TRAX

Just in!! Heated leather seats, only 40k miles! Gas saver!

$23,875 or only $385/mo

2024 TOYOTA COROLLA SE

Just In!! Like New! Leather Seats & LOADED!

$23,900 or only $392/mo

2017 CHEVY COLORADO ZR2

6" lift, roll bar, loaded with big wheels!

$23,900 or only $392/mo

2016 CHEVY TAHOE

4 x 4, ex police car, only 97k miles

Only $24,700

2024 FORD MUSTANG

Just in!
Ready for Fun!!!

$29,550 or only $480/m

2024 MAZDA CX-90

Just in!! Loaded with all the options, third row seating, and only 43k miles!

Only $29,900

2020 CADILLAC ESCALADE

Fully loaded luxury edition!

Only $34,975

2024 FORD E-350 CARGO

16ft box trucks with miles in the 40's. Like new for half the price. 2 left!

$37,900 or only $618/mo

1964 CHEVY CHEVELLE SS

Old School Convertible, Ready to cruise!

$40,000

2023 FORD TRANSIT

12 Pass., Only 58k Miles! Ready for Spring Break!

$43,900 or only $705/mo

2020 LINCOLN NAVIGATOR

Just In! Only 69k Miles, 7 Pass., Leather, Loaded!

$49,900 or only $810/mo

2015 FORD MOTORHOME

Only 19k Miles and Ready for Vacation!

$50,000 or only $810/mo

2025 FORD F-350 SUPER DUTY 4X4

Power Stroke Diesel, Only 89k Miles

$55,500 or only $954/mo

2025 FORD F350 XLT SUPER DUTY

4 x 4, 6.7L Powerstroke diesel, only 86k miles

$59,500 or only $954/mo

2023 CHEVY SILVERADO 1500 LT

Just In!! Only 59k miles! Trail Boss package and fully loaded!

Call for Price

14 and older 8.9% x 60 mos.10 - 17 8.9% x 60 mos., 15 - 19 7.49% x 72mos, 20 - 25 7.49% x 78 mos, w/720 credit

SEE A STAR IT'S A 1 OWNER CAR

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